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Contents for October 20th, 1921, Issue

Plattsburg, 1814 *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **Farnham Bishop** 3
Intrigue, and battle by land and water.

Unwept, Unhonored and Unhung . . . . . **Frederick J. Jackson** 61
A Mexican outlaw makes reparation.

Rum Island . . . . . **Kenneth Howell** 73
Hidden treasure.

N'Gulule . . . . . **F. St. Mars** 79
Cheetah, the hunting-leopard.

Weaved by Warner . . . . . **W. C. Tuttle** 82
Magpie gets his shirt on hind side to.

The Ranger *Poem* . . . . . **Henry Herbert Knibbs** 94

The Pathless Trail *A Four-Part Story Part II* . . . . **Arthur O. Friel** 95
Cannibals and whites in the Brazilian jungle.

The Life of Riley . . . . . **Max Bonter** 121
Stoke-hole scrappers.

Gold Is Where You Find It . . . . . **Stanton C. Lapham** 132
Alaskans fight to keep it.

(Continued on next page)

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(Continued from preceding page)

Small and Quiet . . . . . **Martin D. Schram** 139
The little detective and the big crook.

The Outdoor Song *Poem* . . . . . **Mary Carolyn Davies** 146

Henry Plummer—Bad-Man *A Bit of the Old West* . . . **E. A. Brininstool** 147

Captain Blood's Dilemma *A Complete Novelette* . . . **Rafael Sabatini** 148
A Tale of the Brethren of the Main
Jamaica lies open to the buccaneers.

The Camp-Fire A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers 176

Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader 184

Ask Adventure 185

Weapons, Past and Present 186

Fishing in North America 186

Mountains and Mountaineering 186

Lost Trails 191

The Trail Ahead 192

Headings . . . . . **Will Crawford**

Cover Design . . . . . **Colcord Hemlin**

WITH the outlaws of the Arkansas-Missouri border-country in the days immediately following the Civil War, when the only justice was the justice of the Ku Klux Klan, or of "Chief" Bender with a knife in each boot. "WOLF LAW," a novel by Hugh Pendexter, complete in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

Don't forget the new dates of issue for *Adventure*—three times a month, the 10th, 20th and 30th

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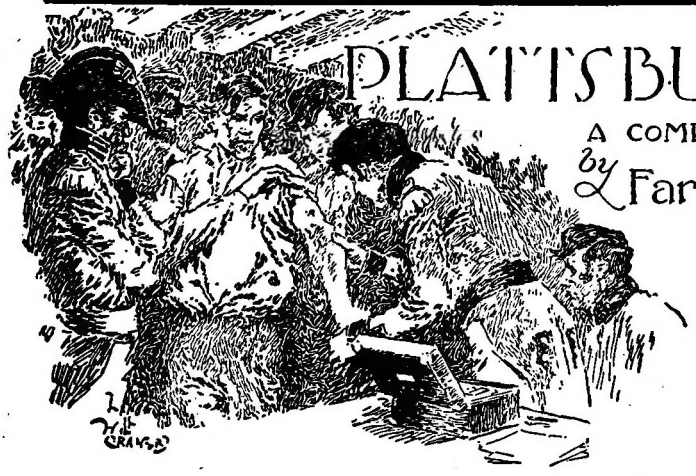

PLATTSBURG, 1814

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

by Farnham Bishop

Author of "The Eighteen-twelver," "The Rest Cure," etc.

CHAPTER I

THE RENEGADE'S WARNING

AUGUST 29, 1814, was the dustiest day in the history of Champlain, the little village on the New York shore near the northern or lower end of the great lake of the same name.

Major-General Izard's division of United States regulars, that had been encamped in and about Champlain since mid-July, was ordered to break camp at dawn. Before the first tent was struck the whole town knew it; before the first regiment was ready to march the entire civilian population was either packing up or already in flight.

It had been an open secret for the past three weeks that General Izard had been ordered from Washington to withdraw his troops and march by way of the Mohawk Valley to Fort Niagara. It was no secret at all that the British forces just across the border, barely five miles to the northward, were only waiting for his withdrawal to come in and take Champlain.

The village was new; but war and invasion were an old, familiar story to all who dwelt in that region. Far to the southward stretch the blue waters of the long, narrow lake, a smooth highroad from the Canada Line to the heart of New York State. For countless centuries before the white men came it had been swept from end to end by harrying war-parties. For two hundred years and more it had known the passing of invading fleets and armies, from Champlain with his Huron war-canoes to Burgoyne with his brigades and frigates. Its shores and islands are strewn with crumbling forts, forgotten battle-fields, and unmarked, uncounted graves.

And now, in the face of what promised to be the mightiest invasion of all, its defenders were being withdrawn.

With drums rattling and fifes shrilling

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"Over the Hills and Far Away" the leading troops of the division swung southward through the streets of Champlain village to the bridge across the Big Chazy and the Plattsburg road. They had started on time and were marching like men who would arrive on time, despite the terrific heat, the ponderous old-fashioned flintlocks and knapsacks, the choking leather stocks, and the dust that was already blending white trousers, blue coats, red facings and tall black shakoes into one dull shade of gray.

Even before their coming it was rather like a sand-storm on Main Street, unpaved and already crowded with excited Champlainers carrying feather-beds, family Bibles, brass-handled highboys, hastily packed haircloth trunks and other treasures out to the ox-carts, hay-wagons and "one-hoss shays" parked before every gate and door. There was no panic but a tremendous amount of bustling and bawling as everybody, from Judge Pliny Moore the village squire to Silly Billy the village idiot, packed up and prepared for flight.

The only idle person in sight was a lithe young half-breed lounging against an elm across the street from the front gate of Judge Moore's place and staring at the sentries, the gold-laced staff officers, and the headquarters troop of green-jacketed dragoons in the garden. The largest and most comfortable house in Champlain, it was invariably chosen as headquarters by every general who passed that way.

Up the street came Bissell's Brigade, making the horses shy with their fifing and drumming and throwing the already chaotic street into worse confusion. A heavy farm wagon, driven by a tall, black-bearded countryman in cowhide boots and homespun, locked its left hind wheel against the elm supporting the half-breed's back. Jumping aside just in time to save his life, the Indian good-naturedly took hold of the spokes to help clear the wheel.

"Bob White! Bob White!"

The bird-notes whistled high and clear, sounding strange in that crowded place and reaching the Indian's ear through all the drumming and trampling. The half-breed looked past the tail-board and saw across the street a young gentleman in a neat black suit and high white neckcloth. This person's eyes were fixed on the passing infantry, but his hands were moving about in a curiously nervous manner.

Between the ranks of the column now shouldering past between them the half-breed followed the peculiar movements of the other's hands with alert intentness. They spoke to him in a language perhaps older than the earliest human speech and common to all the multi-tongued tribes of North America.

Meanwhile the driver was backing his team till the half-breed was able to lift and shove the wheel clear of the elm. As the wagon started forward again the Indian pulled himself over the tail-board and picked his way nimbly and noiselessly on top of the miscellaneous load until he stood behind and above the driver. The first knowledge the latter had of his passenger was a slight pricking in the back of the neck and the low-spoken words—

"You mak' noise, I kill you!"

SURROUNDED though they were by other white men and literally within bayonet-reach of the soldiers, the driver dared make no outcry. He recognized the point of a hunting-knife and had no desire to feel the rest of the blade, though he wondered how the Indian could have drawn it without also drawing the attention of everybody else on Main Street. He did not know that this particular half-breed carried his knife slung across his left breast beneath the shirt and had merely unsheathed it and thrust the sharp point out through the soft buckskin.

"Go up-hill," he whispered to the driver as they neared the corner of the next cross-street.

Through the interval between two regiments the black-bearded man cut across the column and turned his team into a narrow street leading to the westward and away from the lake. Up this lane they drove at a walk until they were beyond the last house of the village.

"Stop," commanded the Indian.

The driver reined in his horses, which were fresh and inclined to be restive, beneath the shade of a large oak. For about five minutes they remained there without either of the men shifting his position or saying a word.

Then the young man in black who had signaled to the half-breed on Main Street overtook the wagon.

"I am sorry to see you here, Selwyn," he said to the bearded man.

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The driver made no reply. He had been waiting for something to distract the half-breed's attention, even for an instant. He had instinctively turned his head to look at the newcomer and shrewdly guessed that the man with the knife had done the same. Instantly the teamster drove his right elbow backward and upward with vicious force.

He felt his elbow strike and sink into something soft, which fell away with a gasp and a thump as the half-breed measured his length on top of the load. Twisting about on his high seat, the driver kicked savagely with his left foot at the face of the young man standing beside the wagon.

But the heavy cowhide boot, instead of smashing the youth's features to pulp, struck only the empty air. With snake-like swiftness the young man threw his head on one side, let the booted foot whirr harmlessly past and then seized it with both hands before his assailant could recover. Grasping the ankle so tightly that the boot could not come off, he gave a mighty tug.

The wagon-seat had no rail and the driver had no time to save himself. Big man though he was, he was jerked bodily out into the air and dropped flat on his back on the dusty road.

As he fell he gave a great tug at the reins. They were promptly snatched out of his hands and the off wheels narrowly escaped crushing his skull as the startled and restive horses bolted. Team and wagon disappeared round the next corner of the lane, the feebly wriggling half-breed still lying prostrate on top of the load.

The black-bearded man also remained flat on his back, though his nerves had not been paralyzed by the point of an elbow in the solar-plexus. But strong fingers were clamped like manacles about his wrists, holding his arms spread-eagled on the ground, while a pair of knees bore heavily on his biceps. Vainly he kicked and struggled to throw off the slender youth whose hazel eyes and girlish pink-and-white face looked down at him with gentle sadness.

"I am indeed very sorry to see you here, Selwyn," he repeated.

"That ain't my name, —— —— you!" barked his prisoner.

"Oh my poor friend," groaned the young man sympathetically. "Why do you lie and take the name of the Lord in vain, at this late hour? Is not the burden of sin already heavy on your immortal soul? Think, think how close is the hour of your dissolution——"

"Like —— it is!" roared the other, arching his chest and heaving himself up with a tremendous effort that threw his lighter adversary aside like a child.

"Mock not at the place of eternal torment," reproved the youth, getting a complicated grip on the back of the man's neck. "For the hour of your doom is nigh!"

Pulling his opponent's other arm up under the one already held prisoner, he forced the stalwart but unskilful teamster face downward into the dust and pinned him there with a knee and a hand, while with the other he deftly untied the sweaty bandanna knotted about the man's neck.

"Please do not force me to break your arm," he implored as he bound a straining wrist.

Unbuckling Selwyn's belt, he strapped his knees tightly together. Then he picked the big man up bodily, carried him over to the cool shade of the oak, set the prisoner down carefully with his back against the trunk, knelt beside him and said—

"Let us pray."

"Look hyar, Mr. Williams," protested Selwyn, "I don't mind your slippery Injun wrasslin' tricks nor bein' strung up by the neck as I reckon' I'm goin' to be. But 'tain't fair nor decent for you to be making fun of me like this."

Grotesque figure though he was, his beard matted with dust and his face streaked with muddy sweat, there was dignity in the bound man's speech and bearing.

Young Williams stared at him with pained astonishment.

"Fun?" he repeated. "Can you think me so base as to mock at your misfortunes? Can not you see that I am sincerely concerned for your spiritual welfare?"

Selwyn stared back earnestly into the frank, almost naïvely innocent, hazel eyes.

"By thunder," he said slowly, "I reckon you're genuine. Say, how in creation did you know my face with all this beard?"

"I didn't," replied Williams. "But I knew your back and the set of your shoulders. You were mad to return to American soil, Selwyn."

"—— America! What's America ever done for me? Given me paper promises instead of pay while I risked my neck for her—drafted my brother and sent him to die in a stinking fever-camp, while our mother

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starved. To —— with a country that treats its soldiers so!"

"If you had only come to me, your captain, instead of brooding over your wrongs, I could have helped you," said Williams. "Then you would have had your mind free to think with and so escaped instead of being captured that time when you were spying for us at La Colle Mill. Resentment, not fear of the rope, made you take the oath of allegiance to King George."

"How did you know that?" demanded Selwyn.

"It was the talk of the British camp, and few words are spoken there that do not reach my ear, as you yourself should know. Here comes my brother with your team."

THE half-breed pulled up the sweating horses, which had bolted for nearly a mile before he could control them and turn them round. Wrapping the reins about the whip, he jumped down from the seat, drew his knife and reached with the other hand for Selwyn's hair.

"No, John," said Williams, intervening. "You must not hurt a prisoner."

"Traitor! Spy! Five good men he send to death!" protested John the half-breed.

Then English failed him and he burst into a flood of angry Mohawk.

Selwyn knew only a few words of this language, but the pantomime was unmistakable. Stamping, gesticulating, brandishing his scalping-knife, the big half-breed raged at the little man in black who stood between him and his vengeance. A dozen times he seemed on the point of stabbing Williams or knocking him out of the way.

Then from threats he turned to pleading. Eloquently he detailed the renegade's crimes and urged a fitting punishment. But Williams shook his head.

"The prisoner must be dealt with according to military law," he said in English to reassure the helpless Selwyn. "Put up your knife and help me lift him into the wagon."

"My brother fights like a warrior but he talks like a woman," snarled the disappointed John in Mohawk as he obeyed.

"I should have warned you that whatever you say will be taken down and used in evidence against you at the court martial," said Williams as they placed the prisoner on a pile of quilts.

"I'll give you a warning for saving my hair," replied Selwyn. "Clear out of York State and all the rest of the States as fast as you can travel. King George has settled his score with Bonaparte and now he's going to settle the Yankees. There's a British army a-coming down from Canada that's plenty big enough to walk over anybody that tries to stop 'em and to bring this whole country back under the crown."

"Possibly," said Williams as he gathered up the reins. "Burgoyne tried that once, you know."

CHAPTER II

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

"I'D RATHER be whipped at the cart-tail than run away and leave the rest of you in the lurch like this, gentlemen."

Pulling out a large red bandanna, the speaker mopped his perspiring face. Even in that dark, cool dining-room at Judge Moore's house, where the conference was being held, the late August heat was stifling. Military punctilio forbade the poor man's taking off or even unbuttoning his blue uniform coat, which was of Arctic weight and gold-laced to within an inch of its life.

The bullion epaulets weighed four pounds apiece and the collar came up to the wearer's ears. This gigantic coat-collar was the most noticeable thing about him. It was open in front and made the sharp-featured little man who wore it look like a fox-terrier defending a gateway. It was also adorned on either side with two stars of the first magnitude, embroidered in silver thread—the insignia of a major-general in the United States Army in the War of 1812.

"You do not have to assure us of your reluctance to retreat, General Izard," said the big brigadier at his left heartily.

He was the first man who had ever been cadet adjutant at West Point, where his splendid figure and soldierly carriage set the standard for future generations. He was so remarkably handsome that he looked well even with the atrocious side-whiskers of the period, like hairy caterpillars crawling past his ears. He was thirty-two years old, half French, half Irish, and wholly American. His name was Alexander Macomb.

Across the table from him sat a gray-haired, clean-shaven man in shirt sleeves,

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the oldest person present and the only one in civilian clothes. But he was entitled to wear a uniform more gorgeous even than that of the regulars, for he was Major-General Mooers of the New York State Militia.

"Washington hasn't countermanded your marching orders, then?" he queried.

"Not a scratch of a pen have I received, sir!" said Izard savagely. "Since that amazing order to transfer my division from here to Niagara, I thought that the War Department had learned something of frontier conditions during the past two years; but now I know that its ignorance is impregnable."

"But it can never hope to equal the Navy Department's, sir," interposed young Commodore MacDonough from the foot of the table. "Remember how poor Captain Woolsey was ordered to sail the *Lady of the Lake* across two miles of dry land to Mickle's furnace, take on a load of ball and shot, and carry it straight up Niagara Falls to Buffalo."

Mooers and Macomb laughed; but Izard was too much worried, though he had the least to worry about of any one there.

"Three weeks ago I sent an urgent remonstrance to Secretary Armstrong," he continued. "I told him that I would obey orders but that I refused to be held responsible for leaving the key to the northeastern frontier unguarded. I said

I shall make the movement you direct; but I shall do so with the certainty that everything in this vicinity except the lately erected works at Plattsburg will in less than three days after my departure be in the possession of the enemy. He is in force superior to mine on this front and daily threatens an attack on my present position at Champlain.

"Three weeks ago I sent that off post-haste to Washington. Plenty of time for an answer—and not a word. Took as long as I decently could to hire baggage-wagons and so on. Now I've ordered the division to march."

Through the open windows of the dining-room they could see the deep, tree-shaded lawn, the white-picketed fence and beyond it the divisional artillery trundling slowly past through the dust that lay white on the long black barrels of the iron twelve-pounders. From the outer office that had once been a drawing-room came the shuffling of heavy feet and the voice of an Irish orderly sergeant exhorting the fatigue party who were removing the heavy chests of headquarters papers.

"I'm almighty sorry to see you and your boys go," said the gray-haired militia general as he looked at the passing column of regulars.

"How many are you leaving behind with General Macomb?"

"All my orders will let me—three thousand."

"That's awful few."

"They're even fewer than that. Half of them are in hospital. The other half are a lot of recruits, convalescents and small details from a dozen different regiments. The largest organizations in General Macomb's command are two companies of artillery and a small battalion of the Sixth Infantry."

"That is why I have been asking you for militia, General Mooers," said Macomb. "How many could you embody in your district?"

"Twenty-fiye hundred at the outside.'

"No more than that?"

"'Fraid not. Clinton County's pretty thinly populated. Plenty of militia across the lake, though."

THE eyes of the Federal officers hardened at this grim jest. "Across the lake" lay Vermont, and the governor of that State was a leader of the Peace Party, who had openly refused to send any men to help the rest of the country and had tried to punish those who had volunteered.

"Vermont is out of the Union for the present," said Macomb.

"And the English know it, sir!" snapped Izard. "They know it and are counting on it. That stubborn fool at Montpelier and those imbecile politicians at Washington are tying America's hands behind her back."

"It's enough to make old Ethan Allen turn in his grave," admitted Mooers. "But I guess I know the Green Mountain Boys better than the Britishers do. They're the independentest lot on earth; that's why they're backing up Governor Chittenden in his fuss about State rights.

"But they'll up and show their independence of him if the English ever start to invade us on the strength of Mart Chittenden's peace talk. Just as soon as you see the redcoats coming up the lake you'll see the Vermonters crossing over."

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"Unorganized and too late," retorted Izard.

"If the British fleet lets them cross at all," supplemented Commodore MacDonough. "Why can't New York send more State troops from the lower counties?"

"Because they've all been sent down to York, as General Macomb can testify."

Macomb nodded. He had just returned from inspecting the defenses of New York City.

"Manhattan Island is crammed with up-State militiamen. The entire city is in a fever of preparation against attack. Men, women and children are working like beavers fortifying Brooklyn and Harlem Heights. They are turning the entire region about the city into a vast fortress mounting more than eight hundred guns. Mr. Robert Fulton has placed a number of his torpedoes at the Narrows."

"How about that new-fangled steam frigate of his?" asked Commodore MacDonough. "Have they finished her yet?"

"No, they've stopped work on her."

"Thought they'd find she was no use," said the naval officer. "I took the steamboat on this lake and tried to make a warship of her. Machinery kept breaking down, so I unshipped the mill-wheels and tea-kettles and turned her into a schooner."

"That was not Mr. Fulton's trouble, however," answered Macomb. "His workmen left because he had nothing but treasury certificates to pay them with and the merchants refused to accept them."

"Pretty state of affairs!" snorted the indignant and pessimistic Izard. "Government bankrupt—nobody willing to lend it a cent—Peace Party preaching treason in the open and trying to make New England secede from the Union—War Department gone crazy—whole country sick of war—and the real fighting just ready to begin."

"'Twouldn't be so bad if only Napoleon had held out a little longer," said General Mooers.

This drew another broadside from Izard.

"He held out a mighty sight longer than anybody else could have done. I know how the French can fight, for I've fought beside 'em. I was a lieutenant of engineers in the French Army back in 1796 and '97. And I know that the men who drove French armies back through Portugal and Spain and over the Pyrenees aren't the sort to be stopped by a handful of raw recruits and green militia. And everybody knows that Lord Wellington's Peninsular veterans have been pouring into Canada by the thousand."

"I wish I knew how many thousand of them were on this front," said Macomb.

"You'll know just as soon as Eleazer Williams comes in to report," Izard assured him.

"Eleazer Williams, the famous chief of the Secret Corps?"

"Yes."

"Is there really such a corps and such a man?" asked Macomb, smiling skeptically. "Or are they both mythological?"

"Never heard tell of *that* tribe," said General Mooers, whose classical education had been neglected. "But Eleazer Williams is a Mohawk half-breed."

"Humph!" said the obviously disappointed Macomb. "I've known a thousand half-breeds, more or less, and I've never seen one yet that I'd trust out of sight and pistol-shot."

"But you've never seen Eleazer Williams," objected Mooers.

"I'll vouch for him absolutely," declared Izard.

"And so will I," put in MacDonough earnestly. "I am a member of his Bible class, and——"

THAT was more than any Irishman's son could endure. Alexander Macomb instantly visualized a long-haired, tallow-faced half-breed in greasy buckskin expounding the Book of Genesis to the spruce commodore and burst into a roar of laughter.

"A most amazing Mohawk!" he exclaimed.

"He's no more a Mohawk than I am," answered MacDonough warmly. "He's as white as any man here."

"But that doesn't prove he hadn't Injun blood in him, commodore," objected Mooers. "I've lived in these parts all my life, and I've known Eleazer Williams' parents for nigh on to thirty year. Old Tom Williams or Tehorakwanekan is a half-breed Mohawk and so's his wife, Mary Ann Konwatewenteta. They used to live in a log cabin with nary a window in it up at the head of Lake George, near the ruins of Fort William Henry.

"I was riding past the old fort back in the Summer of '97 when I first saw little

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Eleazer, or Lazo, as they called him then. He was in swimming with three of his brothers, and his skin was just as brown as theirs."

"That's nothing," interrupted the commodore. "Plenty of white boys tan brown all over in Summer-time if they get enough chances to go in swimming."

"What made me notice the youngster particularly," continued Mooers, "was the crazy way he walked out on top of a high rock and threw himself over. It was a twenty-foot dive into shallow water and he just slumped over anyhow, lit on his head, went under and didn't come up.

"I struck the spurs into my mare, and I tell you she made the sand fly as we pounded along the beach. But by the time I'd got there little Tallow Jack Williams had dived down, fetched his brother up and toted him ashore. He was laying him down on the beach when I rode up.

"I dismounted to see what I could do. The boy was breathing all right, but he was still unconscious. I felt him over and found a big bump on his head where he'd struck a rock under water.

" 'It's a wonder he wasn't killed,' I said to Tallow Jack.

"Tallow Jack didn't say anything. He just went like this."

General Mooers made a curious wavering gesture with his right hand. Macomb who had been stationed for years among the Creeks, recognized the Indian sign-talk symbol for "crazy man" or "fool."

"Pretty soon the boy opened his eyes and took a look around. And do you know, General Macomb, sir, that that look at the sky and the woods and the old fort and the sun a-shining on Lake George is the earliest thing that Eleazer Williams can remember today?"

"The blow on his head destroyed his memory, I suppose?"

"No, sir, it shook his brains together and made 'em work. Before that tumble into the lake Eleazer had been an out-and-out idiot. Since then he's been the smartest chap you'd ever want to deal with."

"And one with whom you will have to deal, General Macomb," said Izard earnestly. "I can not impress on you too strongly the importance of his position. He is your colleague; coordinate with you and Commodore MacDonough and General Mooers.

"The Corps of Secret Intelligence is a separate and independent command. I do not even know how many men are on its rolls or the names of any but a few. But I do know what excellent service it has performed.

"Its scouts know every foot of ground from Fort George to Montreal. Its spies swarm in every British camp. They are the bravest and fiercest of all the Mohawks and American frontiersmen. Their conduct has caused them to be nicknamed 'the Terrible Corps.'

"But Eleazer Williams rules them with an iron hand. No regular battalion is better disciplined. He receives all reports, gives all orders, and is responsible only to Washington. The Government has also appointed him Superintendent of the Northern Indian Department. The Six Nations have made him an Iroquois chief and given him the name of Owarenhiiaki."

"Why, that is what they called the great Sir William Johnson," said Macomb, impressed for the first time. "It means 'the Tree-Cutter,' and taken symbolically it is a very complimentary title, given only to those whom the Iroquois most admire."

"The highest compliment ever paid Eleazer Williams, however, is the standing reward for his capture, alive or dead, offered by the Governor-General of Canada because of Williams' services to our army in this war," continued Izard.

"I do not hesitate to say, sir, that if Eleazer Williams' information and advice had been heeded and acted on with even moderate intelligence the Stars and Stripes would be flying over Montreal today. And every defeat and disaster we have suffered in this region is directly traceable to neglect of his warnings.

"Eleazer Williams told General Wade Hampton that the British were coming up the lake to attack Plattsburg in plenty of time for any one except that political windbag to have thrown troops into the town and saved it. He warned him against de Salaberry's ambush at Chateaugay, which Hampton promptly blundered into. Williams almost prevented that imbecile Wilkinson from making a fiasco of his offensive last year.

"The last and most important thing I have to say before turning over the command to you, General Macomb, is this: trust Eleazer Williams. I have tested him in a hundred different ways and found him

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absolutely trustworthy and loyal. As for his ability, well, I only wish we had a man like him at the head of the War Department."

"Second the motion," endorsed General Mooers, while the commodore nodded approval.

"I'll pay due heed to his warnings, gentlemen," said Macomb. "But I should like to know how this paragon of half-breed scouts became a Bible-teacher."

"That's a long story," replied Mooers. "And I guess General Izard hasn't time to listen to it right now. He'll want to finish talking things over before he starts West."

"But we have talked over everything else," said Izard. "We have agreed on the place and manner of defense and so on. The most important thing left, in my opinion, is to strengthen General Macomb's confidence in Williams.

"Also, I'd like to know myself how any one who was a savage and an idiot at the age of twelve has become a scholar and a gentleman at twenty-eight."

"So would I," declared Commodore MacDonough. "Pass General Mooers the decanter and let's hear the yarn."

CHAPTER III

EUNICE OF DEERFIELD

"DID any of you gentlemen ever hear tell of the Deerfield massacre?" began General Mooers.

His audience shook their heads.

"That was before my time, I guess," said Izard.

"It certainly was—'way back in 1704. All this region was Iroquois country then, and the Massachusetts frontier was on the Connecticut River. Deerfield was a little border settlement that had been wiped out in King Philip's War after the Bloody Run fight, and then settled again when the war was over.

"French Indians from Canada tried to raid the town in 1697. But the Deerfield folks had a fighting parson, the Reverend John Williams. Under his leadership the settlers walloped those raiders good and plenty.

"Seven years later the Indians came back; a thundering big war-party with two hundred Canadians under a Frenchman called de Rouville. They crept up on Deerfield one February night when all the sentinels were asleep.

"The first thing the minister heard was the smashing-in of his own front door. He grabbed up his pistols from the chair beside his bed and blazed away. But he didn't hit anybody, which is probably why the Indians spared his life. They killed about fifty people, burned the town and started back to Canada with a hundred and eleven prisoners.

"It was bitter cold and the snow was deep. But de Rouville was afraid the soldiers from Springfield were on his trail, so he pressed the march at a cruel pace. Soon Mrs. Williams stumbled while she was wading a brook that ran so fast it hadn't frozen. A second later a tomahawk crashed through her brain.

"Every prisoner that fell or lagged behind on that awful three-hundred-mile march was murdered on the spot as a warning to the rest. Twenty were butchered like that, and the others fetched to Montreal. There the French treated them well enough for the next two years.

"But of course the French priests felt it their duty to try to convert the prisoners. All Canada was solid Catholic then, and all New England was solid Protestant, and each side thought the other was inspired by Satan and prayed and preached accordingly. Thank goodness it's different nowadays.

"They had to give the Reverend John Williams up as a bad job when the prisoners were redeemed and sent home in 1706. But his little seven-year-old daughter Eunice had been separated from him and adopted by some French Indians. She'd forgotten all her English and wanted to stay where she was.

"Her father spent the rest of his life trying to win her back. All Deerfield joined him, and the whole town stuck to it the way New Englanders do. They prayed and raised funds and sent out messengers to plead with Eunice and invited her home.

"She came back to Deerfield three separate times after she'd grown up. Went to meeting with a blanket on her back and paint on her face and sat and listened to the preaching. But though they prayed and preached their hardest they couldn't budge Eunice. She liked the Injuns and she was just as stubborn-natured as any other Yankee. Having become a Catholic, she stuck.

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"And so did her folks in Deerfield. Her father died, but the rest of the family and townsfolk kept on trying. And they've been keeping after her children ever since.

"Eunice married a breed named de Rogers and had a boy named John, who was shot by one of Abercrombie's scouts near Lake George in 1758. Her daughter Mary married an English doctor named Williams, who had gone to live with the Injuns. Their son is old Tom Williams, the hunter and herb doctor, Eleazer's father.

"Three years or so after Eleazer fell off the rock and found his wits, along came Deacon Nathaniel Ely, one of the Deerfield clan. They were still talking about Eunice Williams back there, and the deacon offered to take two of her great-grandchildren and give them an education. Old Tom had a full wigwam, so he left him have Eleazer and Tallow Jack.

"Jack couldn't stomach civilization, and pretty soon the deacon sent him back home. But Eleazer took to book-learning and white man's ways like a trout to water."

"Because he's a white man himself," interposed Commodore MacDonough. "Adopted by the Indians just as his great-grandmother was."

"That was easy enough in those days, but there wasn't any war going on around here in the seventeen-eighties and nineties," retorted Mooers.

"But there are always illegitimate children. And it's notorious that babies like that have been given to the Indians to bring up. It's about the only way to hide an undesired child in this country, except infanticide," insisted MacDonough.

"And here is another proof," he continued. "When small-pox broke out among the troops last Winter Eleazer Williams went to be vaccinated. But as soon as he rolled up his left sleeve the doctor told him to roll it down again.

" 'You've been vaccinated before,' he said, pointing to a crescent-shaped white scar. 'Inoculated, anyway. And we're mighty short of vaccine.'

"Eleazer protested that he'd never been vaccinated or inoculated in his life. But every military and naval surgeon in the hospitals and every civilian doctor in Plattsburg told him that there was no other possible way of accounting for such a scar. Now did you ever hear of inoculation that early among the Mohawks?"

"I never did," admitted General Mooers.

"Then if Eleazer Williams couldn't have been inoculated when he was living with the Indians and hasn't been since, it follows that he must have been inoculated some time before he went to live with them," declared the commodore triumphantly.

"But do you see what that implies?" asked Macomb. "No one would inoculate a new-born child, least of all one that was to be taken away and hidden. So Williams must not only have been born but have spent part of his childhood in some civilized community—unless the scar on his arm is more recent than he cares to admit."

"But he assured me positively that he had had that crescent-shaped scar as long as he could remember," insisted MacDonough. "And what earthly motive would he have to lie about it?"

"And Williams isn't a liar," added Mooers.

"Indeed he is not," declared Izard anxiously. "For Heaven's sake, General Macomb, don't distrust him. If you have any faith in our judgment and experience——"

"I have, and therefore I shall have faith in Eleazer Williams," Macomb assured them. "But his taste for theology puzzled me till I heard about the deacon. Did he send the boy to college?"

"No, but he gave him a mighty fine schooling," said General Mooers as he shoved back his chair. "Guess I'd better start calling out my militia. Next time I run across old Tom Williams I'll ask him whether he begat or adopted Eleazer."

THE others rose with him; the council had done its work and was breaking up. In the front hall they met the owner of the house, Judge Pliny Moore, the leading citizen of Champlain. The judge was coming down-stairs with a small haircloth trunk on one shoulder and a big carpet-bag in the other hand.

"I'm sorry to leave your hospitable roof, judge," said Izard.

"You aren't half as sorry as we are to see you go, general," replied the judge earnestly. "Soon as mother finishes packing we're going ourselves. They say the English are coming over the line and into Champlain just as soon as your rear-guard quits the town."

"I only wish they would," growled Izard to Macomb as they descended the tall front

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steps of the Moore house. "Then I'd have the excuse I'm praying for to turn round and fight. But the Britishers will probably be smart enough to wait till I'm too far up the Mohawk Valley."

"Then I'll have time to finish the new forts at Plattsburg," said Macomb. "So you see there's nothing to worry about. Good-by, sir, and good luck at Niagara."

"Good-by, and may the Lord be with you, for you're going to need Him!" answered Izard grimly after he had mounted and acknowledged the other's parting salute.

Down the driveway he trotted, followed by his staff and the smart headquarters troop of dragoons in their tight green jackets and nodding horsehair plumes.

"Well, I must shove off," said MacDonough to Macomb.

Touching his cocked hat, the commodore started down the garden path. Then he stopped and smiled.

"Here comes Eleazer Williams."

CHAPTER IV

ELEAZER REPORTS

"WHERE is he?"

In spite of what he had heard the brigadier half-expected to see a tall, lean ruffian with high cheek-bones and sallow skin, his long, black, greasy hair sweeping the fringed collar of his buckskin hunting-shirt, come swaggering up the garden path. But instead he saw a most peaceable-looking citizen carefully restoring to his pocket-book the pass he had just shown the sentry at the gate.

The newcomer wore a high white neck-cloth and a neat black suit of semi-clerical cut. His face was pink and white, his hazel eyes beamed with mild benevolence, and his whole appearance suggested a Wednesday evening prayer-meeting. As he raised his hat he revealed a head of light brown, very curly hair.

"If this man is an Indian," said Macomb to himself, "then I'm the king of the Cannibal Islands."

"Glad to see you back safe and sound," said Commodore MacDonough. "General Macomb, let me present my friend, Mr. Eleazer Williams."

"What is the strength of the enemy on this front?" asked the brigadier as soon as the three had gone inside and seated themselves.

"Fourteen thousand," replied the scout promptly.

MacDonough whistled and Macomb stared incredulously.

"As many as that? On what grounds do you base that estimate, Mr. Williams?"

"I may have added the figures incorrectly in my head—I dared not set them down on paper," added Eleazer deprecatingly as he looked at the ceiling and checked off the items on his fingers.

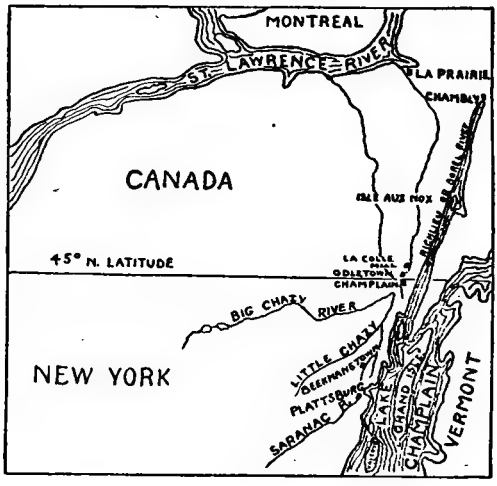
"There are three brigades of regulars: Robinson's, three thousand seven hundred; Power's, three thousand six hundred; Brisbane's, three thousand one hundred; light troops, two thousand eight hundred, composed of Canadian chasseurs and voltigeurs, the Frontier Light Infantry and Meuron's Regiment of Swiss——"

"Swiss?" interrupted the surprized Macomb. "Has Switzerland declared war on the United States?"

"Colonel Meuron and his men are professional mercenaries, thrown out of employment by the late peace in Europe."

"I see—last time it was Hessians. Pray continue with the count, Mr. Williams."

"Squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons,



three hundred; Royal Artillery, four hundred with thirty-six field and siege pieces; rocketeers, sappers and miners, one hundred. That, in round numbers, is the strength of the British forces opposed to yours, General Macomb."

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"On what evidence do you base your figures, sir?"

"I have just returned from a personal tour of inspection through the British camps at La Prairie, Chambly and Odelltown," replied Williams quietly.

"You have? How on earth did you escape detection?"

ELEAZER smiled—the gentle, beatific smile of a simple-hearted parish priest.

"Who would suspect *M. le curé* in his rusty old cassock and shovel hat and the great umbrella tied round with string, as he plods through the camp wishing every one a *bo' jou'*, *mon fils?* Who would order him to halt, or arrest him for going anywhere without a pass?"

"No Canadian certainly. But a British officer might."

"Colonel Willington of the Buffs came very near doing so. He was moving about himself and seemed suddenly to remember that he had run across me in every camp. He detained me tactfully while he sent for his regimental chaplain and then turned the conversation into theological channels.

"We had a very edifying discourse. I satisfied them that I was a real *curé* and took my departure just in time to avoid the Canadian Secret Service men who were trailing me. They told the colonel whom he had been entertaining and then gave me a very hot chase all the way to our outposts. I shall take care to avoid Colonel Willington and his chaplain hereafter."

"But how did you manage to hold up your end of a debate on theology with a regular clergyman?" asked Macomb.

"I have long been studying for the ministry and am prepared to enter it as soon as the war is over," said the surprizing chief of the Terrible Corps.

"Hence the Bible class," said the commodore somewhat impatiently. "Did you see the British fleet at Isle aux Noix, Mr. Williams?"

"Yes."

"What sort of a craft is their new flagship, the *Confiance?*"

"I am little skilled in naval affairs," said Williams diffidently. "But I should say she was almost twice as large as the *Saratoga*. I counted fifteen long twenty-four-pounders on one side of her gun-deck, a forty-two-pounder carronade on the poop, and two others and a long twenty-four on a pivot on the—the upper part of the front end."

"Topgallant fo'csle," translated the naval officer. "You counted all these guns on one broadside only?"

"I saw only one side—I do not know how many there might be on the other. One of her seamen told me that she carries a special furnace for preparing red-hot shot. They are all boasting that when the *Confiance* is ready, in a week or ten days from now, she will sweep the Yankees off the lake."

"Allowing for bow and stern chasers, she must carry at least thirty-nine guns to the *Saratoga's* twenty-six," said the commodore. "The rest of our squadron is a match for the rest of theirs, but a frigate is a heavy overmatch for a corvette."

"And ten Peninsular veterans for one recruit," added Macomb grimly. "It begins to look as if the New Yorkers were going to have some use for those new stone blockhouses on Harlem Heights."

"Many of the British officers are boasting that they will be in Albany by the end of September," said Eleazer.

"But their army, formidable though it seems, has one very great weakness. It is commanded by Sir George Prevost."

"What, the Governor-General?" exclaimed Macomb. "Has he taken the field in person?"

"Yes. He has obtained a major-general's commission and supreme command of the invading forces."

"That's the best news since Lundy's Lane!" cried Macomb.

MacDonough, beating time with his forefinger on Mrs. Moore's dining-table, chanted exultantly:

> "Behold the chief who now commands,
> The biggest wind-bag in both lands!"

"Still, even with the worst sort of amateur generalship, an army like his ought to walk right over an army like mine," admitted the American brigadier. "At the best we can hope for the slimmest possible fighting chance to repulse them at Plattsburg, but no more."

"I should place our chance of victory at very much higher than that, sir," said Eleazer.

"Why?" asked Macomb sharply.

"Because of the old saying—

"An army of deer commanded by a lion is better than an army of lions commanded by a deer.

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CHAPTER V

PLOTS AND PLANS

"CAN I have a few words in private with you, General Macomb?"

"As soon as I have carried this stick to Fort Moreau, Mr. Williams. I wish the officers to set an example to the men."

The brigadier was striding briskly up the steep hill, while carrying balanced across his right shoulder a longer and heavier pine log than most men could have staggered under on level ground. His gold-laced uniform was protected by coarse linen overalls and a long loose frock—the "fatigue suit" of the period—but his face and hands were black with the pitch and resin.

All about him his little army were toiling like beavers; digging moats and trenches, throwing up earthworks, cutting and carrying timber for the revetments, abbatis, and palisades. Under the direction of Captain Totten of the Engineers, long afterward famous as the builder of the Panama Railroad, officers and men were working with a zeal rarely displayed by soldiers on fatigue.

"You have instilled a wonderful spirit in your men, sir," said Williams. "I have never seen soldiers work so hard."

"My method was simple," answered Macomb as he dropped the log on a pile of others beside the half-finished sally-port of Fort Moreau. "I informed them that every detachment would have to fortify the identical spot that it would defend in battle. What do you think of our position?"

"Admirable for defense, but almost impossible to withdraw from in case of defeat."

"The regulars will not withdraw, sir. As for the militia, I shall put them in the woods by the upper ford, where they can fight for a while and then run away as usual."

"It is about the militia that I wish to consult you, general. The Governor of Vermont has again denied your request for troops, has he not?"

"Absolutely."

"Permit me to show you a copy of the letter he should have written, sir."

While Macomb was reading the letter and the two were walking from Fort Moreau toward one of the few clumps of trees still standing near it, Eleazer Williams looked with interest at the activities about him. Beside the main fort, two smaller flanking earthworks were being rapidly thrown up. These were named respectively for Generals Scott and Brown. The other was named for one of Napoleon's marshals, exiled to America—where he had won the friendship of Macomb—and afterward killed in Russia by a French cannon-ball.

Blockhouses, batteries, and a strongly built and fortified stone mill were utilized to convert the whole triangular peninsular between Cumberland Bay and the mouth of the Saranac into one formidable fortress. Across the river, which served the entrenched camp as a moat on the eastward side, lay the village of Plattsburg. The little town was still half in ruins since last year's raid and almost deserted.

To the north and westward stretched the broad crescent of Cumberland Bay. There Commodore MacDonough had assembled his greenwood fleet and was hurriedly turning his fresh-water recruits into fighting seamen.

They were holding "great gun practise" on board the *Saratoga*, *Eagle*, *Ticonderoga* and *Preble;* ramming home, priming, running the long guns and carronades in and out of the ports, leveling, training the whole battery in unison "sharp on the quarter" or "right abeam." The sloop and the schooner looked natural enough, but the corvette and the brig with their tall square-rigged masts and high black hulls and rows of white-painted gun-ports seemed strangely out of place on those inland waters, with the Green Mountains for a background. But the sight of them and the thought of the names they bore gave strength and courage to the fort builders.

Between the sailing-ships and the shore ten long, slender galleys were splashing about, training their rowers and lending a fantastic medieval touch to the scene.

"PRAY where did you obtain this letter, Mr. Williams?" demanded Macomb.

"One of the Secret Corps wrote it at my dictation. He was a forger of bank-notes before he was saved from sin, and his hand has not lost its cunning."

"Not an iota! I would have sworn that Governor Chittenden himself had written me this after coming to his senses at last. Promises to hasten to my aid with every man and firelock he can muster—I only wish he would. Why have you shown me this, Mr. Williams?"

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"That you might answer it, sir, congratulating the Governor of Vermont on his new-found patriotism. Also, please urge him to muster his troops as secretly as possible, and wait till you send word that the time has come to move against the invaders' flank and rear. Be sure to mention Bennington and Saratoga. Then please let me have both letters, sir, the second being endorsed, 'Copy to Mr. Williams,' with a note instructing me to read, memorize and destroy them both as soon as possible."

"I see—false dispatches intended to fall into the enemy's hands."

"Exactly, sir. The one weak spot in Sir George Prevost's splendid army is Sir George Prevost. Outwardly blustering and confident, he knows that he is no soldier and fears the fate of Burgoyne. Otherwise he would not be still hesitating after having crossed the border two days ago. The slower his advance the better for our cause. The sight of these letters will increase his caution."

"Unless he is shrewd enough to guess their purpose. How could their capture be made plausible?"

"Very simple, sir. I have learned from Selwyn——"

"That black-bearded renegade you captured and then defended before the court martial?"

"Yes, sir."

"If it hadn't been for your plea of mitigating circumstances, the scoundrel would have been hanged as he deserved. Prison's a dashed sight too good for him, and I wouldn't trust his word for an instant, sir."

"It will be very easy to test his veracity, General Macomb. If you will please withdraw the picket on the road from Cumberland Head to Plattsburg tonight and if I am not kidnaped before morning, then Selwyn was not telling the truth."

"He pretended to warn you against such a plot?"

"He declared that he was sent across the border to help abduct me. Sir George Prevost has long offered a reward for my capture. A party of disguised Canadian rangers are to make the attempt tonight. The fastest sloop on the lake is to bring them to a certain cove north of Cumberland Head, and they can be back at Champlain by sunrise.

"Once there, I shall not be long a prisoner. My spies are already in the town and my escape arranged for. Between our evacuation of the town at noon on the 29th, and the entry of the British four hours later, every window-bar in the jail was filed nearly through and the groove filled in with putty and rust. I had this and certain other things done for the benefit of any of the Secret Corps who might be imprisoned there, little thinking how useful I might find it myself."

"I can not permit you to attempt anything of the kind," said General Macomb. "You forget, Mr. Williams, that you would be hanged as a notorious spy within twenty-four hours after the English laid their hands on you."

"But I have been looking up that point in the new Manual of Court Martial and Military Law," replied Eleazer. "A spy can not be punished for past offenses after he has once returned to his own lines. He must be caught in the act. And surely Sir George Prevost, who with all his faults is a man of honor, can not condemn me to the gallows for reading my own correspondence in my own room in my father's house, which is where his kidnapers expect to find me."

Macomb could make no denial, for he had compiled that manual himself. But Eleazer's last point surprized and interested him.

"Your father is a householder in Plattsburg?"

"Yes, sir. Our home is near the edge of the town, where the party who are to abduct me can creep up unobserved."

"I thought your father lived near the foot of Lake George," persisted the brigadier.

"He used to, sir. He moved to Plattsburg five years ago to be nearer his old friends."

"He came from this part of the country, then?"

"No, sir," said Eleazer quietly. "He came from Canada."

"When?"

"In 1776."

"In '76? Was he in the Revolution?"

As white and still as a marble statue, Eleazer Williams stood pointing out over Lake Champlain.

"When Benedict Arnold's little squadron was defending the channel there between Valcour Island and the mainland against the overwhelming British fleet my father was lurking in the woods, in feathers and war-paint like the other Canadian Indians with

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him, waiting to kill and scalp any Americans who might try to escape ashore. Afterward he fought for Burgoyne at Bennington and Saratoga."

The young man's voice was unshaken and his eyes looked steadily into Macomb's as he said this without a trace of fear, apology or defiance. It was a confession that might well damn him utterly in the general's eyes.

But the way he made it went straight to the Irish heart of Alexander Macomb. And the quick, straight-thinking brain that the brigadier had inherited from the other half of his ancestry knew intuitively that the man who could bear such testimony against himself was a man to be trusted.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Williams," said General Macomb, placing his hands on Eleazer's shoulders. "Whatever your father was then, I am very sure that he and you are both Americans now."

CHAPTER VI

THE ABDUCTION

"BROTHER, it is agreed. I go."

"Ugh!" grunted Tallow Jack the half-breed, squatting on the hearth where he was broiling black bass over the bed of birch coals in the open fireplace of their father's house.

A regular white man's dwelling, it was a great improvement over the old windowless lodge of mud-chinked logs down at the foot of Lake George. The Williams family thoroughly appreciated the fireplace and chimney and sometimes even opened a window. But there was a strong Mohawk flavor to their housekeeping.

Just now the two boys were camping out there by themselves. Their father was gone on one of his interminable herb-hunting trips in the Adirondacks, and their mother had been persuaded to go with the other refugees to Ogdensburg.

Eleazer gnawed his roasting-ears and ate his fish with his fingers as he squatted on the floor beside his brother. Between mouthfuls Tallow Jack protested against his letting himself be carried off.

"Let us wait outside with ten of the Corps, and when the raiders break into the house we shall have them like suckers in a fish-trap," he urged.

"You will wait outside, but I shall wait inside," answered Eleazer with finality. "It is time to begin your watch, brother."

"You are a fool and will be hanged for it. And I shall be there in the crowd looking on."

With which cheerful farewell Tallow Jack walked to the door and blended into the night. Eleazer threw the remnants of their meal into the fire, put on a few logs, washed his hands, lit a candle and went into his bedroom.

Sitting down at the pine table where he did his paper-work, he placed the candlestick so that his face could be seen from outside through the uncurtained window. He spread out the false dispatches and some minor documents before him, arranged pen, ink and sand, and then settled down to read the Bible.

He read till the candle was low in the socket and the conviction was strong in his mind that Selwyn had been lying. Certainly the kidnapers could not have a better night. Not a star was showing, and the strong north wind would bring them swiftly up the lake.

It was bitterly cold, as it so often is at the end of August. A rain-drop spatted against the pane. Eleazer thought of Tallow Jack waiting outside in the rain and was worried; for all their family, hardy in every other way, were extremely susceptible to lung-diseases. The two brothers were the survivors of twelve children, ten of whom had died of tuberculosis.

"*Too-whit! Too-whit!*"

The owl-call was the signal agreed on that Tallow Jack had sighted a party approaching the house. Eleazer waited a little, then closed the Bible, rose and started across the room, intending to place the sacred book on a high shelf lest it be torn and trampled.

"Crash!"

The house-door had been smashed off its hinges. Moccasined feet thudded over the floor as the raiders rushed into the house. Into Eleazer's mind leaped the memory of his ancestor, the minister of Deerfield, wakened by the same fearful sounds.

"And now," he thought with amusement. "An Indian minister is to be carried off by white savages."

At that moment four men sprang into the bedroom; but whether they were white or red, Englishmen or French Canadians, it was impossible to tell. Their faces were completely and ingeniously masked by blue knit stocking-caps pulled down to the chin with little circles clipped out for eye-holes.

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This much Eleazer saw as he tossed the Bible on the bed, bounded back to the desk and thrust the dispatches into the candle-flame. Before the papers could catch they were torn out of his hands. Before Eleazer could put up even the semblance of a fight or give a cry for help his arms were pinned and bound, his mouth gagged and his eyes blindfolded.

He could hear bureau drawers being turned out and more papers gathered up as the raiders ransacked the room. They made a short job of it, probably because they feared discovery by a passing patrol. Without a word two men took Williams by the elbows and led him out of doors.

Blindfolded though he was, the feel of the rain and wind on his face and of the ground underfoot told him where he was and which way they were heading. First came crunching gravel, then the deep-rutted mud of the unpaved street, then the hard-packed, narrow short-cut through Bolton's pasture. Branches soughed overhead—they were passing the clump of willows where Tallow Jack lay hid. He would trail the party to the landing-place, watch them embark and then report to General Macomb.

IT WAS pouring hard by the time they reached the lake road. Though the picket had been withdrawn, they made a wide circuit round the place where it should have been, which showed that the raiders had been well informed. From the low-muttered "*sacrês*" when they ran into a patch of blackberries on the détour Williams decided that his captors were French-Canadian *voyageurs*.

Into the teeth of the storm they plodded down the muddy road for at least two miles without passing a house or meeting a soul. Suddenly his two guides wheeled Williams to the right and helped the bound man climb an invisible rail fence, slippery with rain. Through sodden waist-high brush they forced their way till the undergrowth thinned and ceased.

The mud underfoot changed to steep slopes of sand. They had reached the dunes by the lake. Louder and louder sounded the boom and hiss of the breakers.

They came to a halt hard by the water's edge. One of the four *voyageurs* gave an ear-splitting whistle, such as a man makes with the tips of his forefingers in his mouth. An answer came faintly back through the storm. Then the five stood and shivered in their wet clothes and the bitter wind for what seemed ages, till at last Eleazer heard the thump of oars in the thole-pins and the grate of the grounding keel.

Raiders and prisoner embarked, shoved off and pulled out into the little cove. Even in that sheltered water it was choppy rowing. Presently they fetched up with a thump alongside something. Eleazer felt himself lifted up out of the boat by the shoulders, dragged inboard over the coaming of a cockpit, picked up by two men, carried a few feet and dumped down on what he deduced was the cabin floor.

All hands crowded in after him. A cork plopped, and the reek of bilge-water, unaired bedding, wet wool and close-packed human bodies was reinforced by a strong smell of *eau de vie*.

"Shall we give him some?" asked a voice in *habitant* French.

"He doesn't need it, snug in the cabin, while we toil in the rain," answered one evidently in command. "A nice time we shall have beating up against this *sacré* gale. *Allons, mes braves.*"

Sailors and *voyageurs* went out on deck, the last man pausing to lash Eleazer's ankles together, leaving him a helpless bundle on the floor. Having caught the elusive master spy at last, they were taking no chances.

He heard the pounding of feet on deck, the creaking of the blocks as jib and mainsail were set and the scrape and thump of the little anchor broken out and dragged inboard hand over hand. The helm was put over, and the sloop sped swiftly out of the cove.

But when she cleared the point and met the full force of the gale in the open lake the little craft heeled over nearly to her beam-ends. Williams felt himself sliding down to leeward till he fetched up against the side of the cabin, his ear pressed close to the groaning, laboring timbers. Every inch of her seemed to shudder and wince beneath the smashing blows of the short, steep waves that make a lake storm harder to face than a salt-water gale.

Round she came on the other tack, sending the helpless prisoner rolling over and over to the other side, where the back of his head struck the planking with a blow that half-stunned him. If it had been his face, it would almost certainly have cost him a broken nose. If this sort of thing kept up,

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then long before they made port he would be beaten to a jelly.

Wriggling his hardest, the bound man wormed his way forward till his feet touched the forepeak bulkhead. He knew that the sloop would soon have to tack again, in the narrow channel between Grand Isle and the New York shore. As soon as he felt the slope beneath him begin to change, he threw himself to one side with all his strength. Pivoting as he slid to leeward, this time Williams struck the cabin wall with his right shoulder. With a wiggle and twist he straightened himself out and braced his feet himself firmly against the opposite side.

"That's better," he thought. "Even if my head is down-hill half the time. Now if I could only take off these wet clothes."

Drenched to the skin and unable to move, the prisoner in the cabin felt the cold ten times worse than did the crew on deck, with their tot of brandy apiece and plenty of exercise to keep them warm. Colder and colder he grew as the hours passed and the sloop fought her way slowly and doggedly to windward, till he was shivering with the chill that bit him to the bone.

Then a strange and inexplicable warmth began to glow in his veins, grateful at first but mounting rapidly to a burning heat. Eleazer recognized the symptoms. His exposure had brought on an attack of chills and fever, such as he had often suffered before.

Desperately he prayed that he might be mistaken as he fought against his old enemy with all his will-power. He must conceal his illness or he would be taken to the hospital instead of the jail. Above all he must keep control of his senses.

But little by little the pitching and rolling, the creaking and groaning of the timbers, the shouts and trampling of the crew, merged into the nightmares of delirium. The last thing he remembered was a frightful sensation of choking to death.

At what time they reached the mouth of the Big Chazy or how he was taken ashore, Eleazer Williams never knew.

CHAPTER VII

REVELATION

WHEN Eleazer recovered consciousness he found himself unbound, undressed and lying in a comfortable bed. His skin was cool and moist—the fever was gone. His throat still hurt, but the choking sensation had almost disappeared. His neck was swathed in hot compresses, and there was a bitter after-taste of Jesuit's bark in his mouth.

Opening his eyes, he recognized the room where he lay as the guest-chamber in Judge Pliny Moore's house in Champlain. Eleazer had spent many a night there during the past two years. The British being in possession, this house would now be Sir George Prevost's headquarters, and this room would ordinarily be occupied by some one high on the staff, if not by the governor-general himself.

"Considering how often he has expressed a desire to hang me on the highest tree in Upper and Lower Canada," thought Williams appreciatively, "this is extraordinarily generous of Sir George."

But was it generosity or calculating shrewdness? Eleazer had been delirious with fever—perhaps raving, babbling, betraying Heaven knows what military secrets! Realizing this, he turned his head for the first time, half-expecting to see a scarlet-coated officer, note-book in hand, at his bedside.

But instead he saw a tall, grim-looking Sister of Mercy.

"How long have I been here?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Be quiet and inhale this," she answered, holding a steaming bowl under his helpless nose.

The pungent, aromatic steam went up his nostrils and down his throat, making him cough till tears came to his eyes.

"It will do you much good," said the sister in French, while with her free hand she adjusted the pillows and helped him sit up.

"Now if *monseigneur* can hold the bowl himself for a moment, I will summon the doctor."

Eleazer nodded and took the inhaler. Through the tingling steam he saw the nurse leave the room in a rather peculiar manner. Keeping her face toward the patient, she backed to the door, opened it, and dropped a low courtesy on the threshold before going out.

As soon as the door closed behind her Eleazer set down the bowl on the little octagonal table beside the bed and started to get up, only to fall back, weak and dizzy, on the pillows. The nurse had run no risk

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in leaving him alone, for he was far too feeble to escape.

But why had she called him *monseigneur* and backed out of the room? Sisters of Mercy are rarely eccentric or playful, and this one had the awesome dignity of a mother superior.

Before Eleazer could solve the mystery she returned to the sick-room. With her was a plump, swarthy little man in the white uniform with orange facings of Meuron's Regiment. By his professional air and unmilitary figure Eleazer knew him for the regimental surgeon.

His entrance was even more striking than the sister's exit. Making a most magnificent salute, he removed his shako, pressed it against his bosom and bowed low, revealing a brownish bald head that shone like varnished oak. Crossing to the bedside, he beamed down at his patient.

"Ah!" he exclaimed in French with a strong Swiss accent. "The fever is broken —the rest is but convalescence."

"How long have I been ill?" asked Eleazer.

"Since Wednesday night. It is now Saturday noon."

Saturday noon! Eleazer had expected to escape from jail and be back in Plattsburg by Thursday night. And now he was unable to set foot to the floor.

"I am ashamed," he murmured. "I should have endured a little exposure better than that."

"It was not the exposure!" declared the doctor indignantly. "It was those species of pigs to whom the affair was intrusted. The gag they thrust in your mouth was the unwashed handkerchief used by one of them who had lately recovered from the quinsy. Foul with contagion, it gave you, drenched and chilled as you were, the disease in its most malignant form.

"Had not the captain of the sloop sent a man below to see how you were faring you would soon have choked to death. They made haste to remove the gag, strip and wrap you in blankets and do all they could to remedy the harm their ignorance had done."

"And in such a storm," said Eleazer appreciatively.

Even if their motive had been no higher one than the difference between the rewards for his living and his dead body, that cabin could have been no easy place in which to care for a sick prisoner.

"This morning when the fever was at its height I ventured to lance the swelling in the throat," continued the doctor. "In a few days *monseigneur* will be able to travel."

"Why do you address me by that title, sir?" demanded Eleazer.

"Hush—you must not use your voice," said the physician, across whose face had flashed a look of regret as if in self-reproach for a slip of the tongue.

After feeling the patient's pulse and giving the nurse some low-spoken instructions he left the room, neither backing out like the nurse nor turning his back on the bed, but approaching the doorway at a tactful and ambiguous angle, bowing on the threshold and closing the door after him.

THE nurse brought Eleazer some chicken broth, the first food he had had since his supper before the fire with Tallow Jack. Having finished, he thought of his brother and wondered if he had ventured through the British lines to seek for him. While trying to think of a way to communicate with the other Secret Corps agents in Champlain Eleazer fell asleep.

For twenty-four hours or so he slept, ate, meditated and took his medicine, while his health and strength poured back into him. Then to his annoyance he woke from a doze to find his nurse gone and the delirium apparently returned.

Standing in the middle of the room was a figure that belonged to a vanished age. The buckled shoes with high red heels, the white silk stockings, gray silken small-clothes, embroidered waistcoat and long-tailed coat, the touch of snowy lace at the throat and wrists, the powdered wig and the dainty, silver-hilted court-sword, all were in the fashion of the last days of the Old Régime.

Tucking his three-cornered hat under his left arm-pit, the wearer of this ancient splendor made a bow that comported perfectly with his costume, his figure and his face. At first he seemed a singularly handsome youth till closer scrutiny betrayed the network of fine lines and wrinkles beneath the powder and rouge. And his eyes were hard and old.

"If you are real, speak!" ordered Eleazer.

"As your royal highness commands."

"That will do," said Eleazer coldly. "Kindly present my compliments to Sir

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George Prevost and say that I find his hospitality unequaled except by the boorishness of a certain member of his staff."

"Magnificent!" exclaimed the other approvingly. "On my word of honor, *monseigneur*, this is no practical joke nor masquerade. As proof of my sincerity, let me ask if you have ever seen the subject of this portrait."

From the lower shelf of the octagonal table he took a large portfolio, opened it and handed Eleazer a water-color. The feel of the heavy drawing-paper was proof that whatever this extraordinary business was, it was not delirium.

"Yes. I never forget a face. It was fifteen years ago, in the Summer of 1799, when the man whose picture this is stepped out of a canoe on the beach before my father's lodge. He was dressed much as you are, but shabbily, and spoke the same sort of French.

"Calling me to him, he examined my bare legs and particularly my knee-caps. Patting me on the head, he murmured: '*Pauvre garçon! Pauvre garçon!*' several times. Then he gave my father some gold pieces and went away. I never saw him again, nor would my father say who he was. How did you obtain his portrait, *monsieur?*"

"It was painted for me by his own hand."

"It is signed 'Bellanger.'"

"The name of an indifferent artist and a great scoundrel. But not so great a scoundrel as this."

Eleazer stared as if fascinated at the second picture the stranger showed him—an engraving of a brutal-looking ruffian in a fur cap.

"That face was the terror of my childhood—it has haunted every nightmare of my life!" Williams exclaimed. "Last night I saw it in my delirium. Except for the cap—was this man bald?"

"Yes."

"So I have always seen him. So I have always pictured Satan. Who is he?"

"His name was Simon."

"I have never heard him spoken of before."

"May I ask from what age you date your earliest recollections?"

"From the age of twelve. Before that I was an imbecile."

"You were made one by that ruffian's brutality."

"Then I have not always lived among the Mohawks?"

"You were born in a palace. You are of the noblest blood of Europe."

"You assert, then, that Thomas Williams is not my father?"

"That filthy savage!"

Anger choked Eleazer's already inflamed and weakened throat till he was unable to say a word. But his eyes blazed with indignation.

"I crave your pardon," said the stranger humbly. "I am abashed by the sight of such loyalty and devotion to a barbarian foster-father. But the time has come for your true parentage to be revealed. Know, then, that your royal highness' father was none other than that blessed martyr, Louis the Sixteenth, King of France."

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHILD OF THE TEMPLE

"MY FATHER was King Louis XVI?" repeated the astounded Eleazer.

The stranger bowed.

"But that is utterly impossible. His son, the little Dauphin, died in prison."

"So it is generally supposed. But another died in his stead, while the Dauphin was smuggled out of the prison by my agents."

"Who are you, *monsieur?*"

"Charles François Philippe de Mormont, Marquis de Fenouil, at the service of your royal highness."

"Please be seated and tell me about it, *M. le marquis*," said Eleazer simply.

The marquis seated himself and began:

"TWENTY years ago I was in Paris, despite the revolution, as the secret agent of your royal highness' uncle, now the King of France but then the Count of Provence. When the royal family had failed to escape from France and had been brought back prisoners from Varennes, he had succeeded and was established at Coblenz, then the headquarters of the emigration and the counter-revolution.

"After the judicial murder of the king and queen, all our efforts were centered on rescuing their child. For that purpose I voluntarily returned to Paris, though my name was on the list of *émigrés* under sentence of death.

"Disguised as a moderate republican, of the type then coming into power after the reaction of Thermidor, I played my loathsome

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part well enough to escape detection. Provided with unlimited funds, I acquired influence until I was able to place my subordinates within the very walls of the Temple.

"The Tower of the Temple, one of the most ancient and remarkable buildings in Paris, was erected by the Knights Templar about the year 1200 and was designed as the treasury and arsenal of the order. It consists of a massive square tower one hundred and fifty feet high, the walls of which are more than nine feet thick, flanked at the angles by four circular turrets crowned with conical caps.

"This enormous and massive pile is divided into four stories, each enclosing a space nearly thirty-six feet square. The ground floor at that time was devoted, together with three of the turrets, to the quarters of the municipal officers on service in the Temple.

"In the fourth turret was a spiral staircase which ran uninterruptedly to the top of the building. At each landing were two doors, the outer of oak, the inner of iron. The first story was occupied by the guard. The second story was divided into four rooms, one of which was occupied by your royal highness.

"I at once perceived that if the concierge at the entrance to the tower and the municipal officers could be gained over, then communication with the upper stories could be held without the knowledge of the soldiers confined within the massive walls of the guard-room.

"The commissary or keeper of the Temple was one Laurent, a humane man who had been appointed after the removal of the infamous Simon. Breaking down the door of the dark, foul dungeon where a delicately nurtured child had been caged like a wild beast and his food thrust in to him between the bars, the new keeper had discovered a feebly moving, skeleton-like creature covered with sores and vermin—a being whose eyes regarded him with the dull stare of imbecility.

"Horrified, the good Laurent had his prisoner removed to a clean, airy room, where he was bathed and properly clothed and fed. With careful nursing the child's bodily health was restored, but his intelligence had been utterly broken down. He could play with a flower or a toy, but that was all. He never spoke; he never seemed to think.

"Early in the Spring of 1795 Laurent asked for an under-keeper. The Committee of Public Safety appointed a certain notorious sansculotte named Gomin assistant commissary of the Temple. Little did they suspect that he was one of my trustiest men.

"I communicated with him by means of my valet Doisy, who by the way is my servant on this campaign. He pretended to be a cousin of Gomin, whom he visited and met in the quarters of Lienard, the steward and concierge. That patriot was soon bribed.

"Laurent retired into private life at the end of March. He was succeeded by Captain Lasne, who had served in the Garde Français before the Revolution and was a royalist at heart. With him the entire permanent staff of the Temple was at my command.

"But there remained the acting commissary of the day, an officer who visited the tower every morning to inspect and report on the prisoner and his care. There was a different inspector each day, appointed by each of the forty-eight sections in rotation. Nothing could have been more admirably adapted to my plan.

"On the morning of the twelfth Prairial—pardon me, the thirty-first of May—the acting commissary of the day drove up to the Temple in a large old-fashioned coach drawn by two horses. One must not expect too much republican simplicity from a commissary, particularly on a rainy day. It was pouring in torrents. Not a soul was about when he arrived at the entrance to the Temple.

"Lienard the concierge came from his lodge to whisper through the open window of the carriage—

" 'All is prepared.'

"The acting commissary of the day—our friend the artist Bellanger—pressed a spring hidden in the upholstery. The false back of the rear seat of the coach swung open, revealing a hiding-place between it and the real back of the vehicle.

"In this narrow space lay a ten-year-old boy, a deaf-mute, dazed with drugs and horribly disfigured with scrofula. In other respects he was not unlike the captive prince, who was suffering from the same disease but to a much slighter extent.

"Wrapping the child in his cloak, Bellanger left the coach and hurried into the Temple. Unseen, unsuspected by the soldiers carousing in the guard-room over a triple portion of wine issued them in honor

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of the keeper's birthday, he mounted the stairs.

"Captain Lasne accompanied him with the keys. To unlock the doors, place the impostor in the prince's bed and carry off the gentle, unprotesting imbecile—what could have been easier?

"Returning to the ground floor, Bellanger wrote his report in the book provided for that purpose.

" 'The little Capet,' he wrote with a steady hand, 'is seriously ill. A physician should be provided.'

"Waiting till the street was again free from passers-by, the conspirators placed the royal child in the well-cushioned and ventilated hiding-place in the coach. Bellanger drove directly to the nearest barrier. He wore the tricolor sash of a commissary on duty; his papers were all in order. He was to proceed post-haste to Verdun on the service of the republic.

"Once outside Paris, however, he took the road to Le Havre. At every post house four fresh horses were in readiness. But the rains continued, sweeping away bridges and turning the roads to quagmires. When at last Bellanger reached Le Havre, he found to his dismay that the Swedish brig on which he had engaged passage to Hamburg had already sailed.

"Panic-stricken with the idea that an order for his arrest might be following him from Paris, Bellanger lost his head. He thought only of escaping the guillotine. He dared not wait for another vessel to clear for Hamburg or any other port in Europe. One ship was about to sail, and on her he accordingly embarked.

"That ship was the American bark *Pocantico*, bound for New York. She was old and slow, and had to battle with storms and head winds almost all the way. When after a passage of nearly three months Bellanger reached New York he was met by the news, brought by a faster ship, of the death of the little prisoner in the Temple.

"The substitute, a wretched waif of the gutter whom no one missed or mourned, had died. The real son of Louis XVI was alive and greatly improved in health by the sea-voyage but still an imbecile.

"Bellanger's duty was plain. Amply provided with funds, he should have taken the first ship available for England or Germany. But he trembled at the thought of being captured and brought to the guillotine. The Atlantic swarmed with French frigates and privateers.

"Better to stay in America, where the money in his pocket would make him a rich man. Better to wait until either the republicans or the Bourbons finally prevailed and then levy blackmail under threat of producing the rightful claimant to the throne.

"With this base purpose in mind Bellanger looked about for an orphanage or other suitable asylum for the child. But there were no such institutions in this barbarous country.

"A bachelor could not be burdened with such a charge, nor could he place the boy in a private family without causing dangerous gossip. There were many royalist refugees in America, any one of whom might recognize the Bourbon features.

"Finally he decided that the best hiding-place would be among the savage Indians of the forest. Proceeding to Albany, he learned from the fur-traders of your royal highness' foster-father, Thomas Williams.

"Arrangements were soon made. The honest half-breed and his squaw vowed eternal secrecy, and curiously enough appear to have kept their word.

"A few years later they notified Bellanger that their adopted son was no longer an idiot. Finding this to be the case, he gave what little money he could spare toward your royal highness' education.

"But M. Bellanger had less and less to spare thereafter. He was no match in business for the Yankees, who soon stripped him of his ill-got funds. He wandered about America, painting tavern signs for a bare living. His ingenious plans, like those of a few million others, were upset by the unlooked-for rise of the usurper Bonaparte. When at last the Corsican was overthrown and Louis XVIII seated on the throne of his fathers, Bellanger was dying of yellow fever in New Orleans.

"Overcome with remorse, he wrote a letter from his death-bed to me, his former chief. Imagine the consternation of our king on learning that his beloved nephew was a republican spy, in imminent danger of being shot or hanged by the English.

"The king himself consulted with the Prince Regent of England. Meuron's Regiment of Swiss was transferred from our service to the English expedition destined for the conquest of New York. I myself was sent, nominally as military attaché, but

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armed with special ambassadorial powers. To me was intrusted the task of recovering the lost son of Louis XVI.

"That task I have accomplished."

"HOW do you know that I am not the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Williams?" asked Eleazer.

The marquis smiled.

"Your royal highness has no memories of the Temple or the Tuileries?"

"None whatever."

"Yet the memories remain, buried deep beneath the surface of the mind, like the ruins of ancient Gaul in the soil of France. Two nights ago in the delirium of fever Eleazer Williams spoke with the voice of Louis Charles de France; babbled of things unknown outside the inmost circle of the Court of Marie Antoinette. Behold still further proof."

From the portfolio the marquis took a sheet of foolscap and a faded, yellowed ace of diamonds. Both were covered with broken sentences and fragments of words, written in ink with many blots and in an awkward, fumbling hand.

"Is this the handwriting of Mr. Eleazer Williams?"

"Certainly not."

"Yet the so-called Mr. Williams wrote this scrawled page when a pen was placed in his hand night before last. It is the writing of a child. Are not both these writings precisely similar in style?"

"Absolutely. But one is considerably older than the other."

"By twenty years. This playing-card was written on by the Dauphin in the Temple; this sheet of paper by yourself in this room night before last.

"If further proof were needed, it is indelibly written on your royal highness' living body. The scars of scrofula on the left knee, the inoculation mark on the left arm—all the well-remembered tokens are there.

"As for the likeness, who would notice it in this country of savages? But I, who have spent a lifetime in the service of the House of Bourbon, know how striking is the family resemblance among its members. Never have I seen any one so obviously a Bourbon as your royal highness."

"It is enough," said the bewildered Eleazer. "I am convinced—and overwhelmed. Please give me a little time to think over what you have told, sir."

The marquis bowed and backed out of the door.

Trembling in every nerve with the shock of the astounding news, Eleazer tried to consider what he had just heard and what he should do next. But his brain refused to work. It could only wonder dazedly, as if paralyzed.

To help concentrate his mind he closed his eyes. Presently the comforting thought came to him that it was all a dream. Turning over, he went peacefully to sleep.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHOICE

"HURRAH! Hurrah! Hurrah!" Resounding, exultant cheers from thousands of hearty throats roused Eleazer from his sleep. It was early dawn—he had slept at least eighteen hours. His first impressions were renewed strength and a raging appetite.

"What is that cheering for?" he asked the nurse.

"It is nothing. Lie down and do not excite yourself," she replied after the irritating fashion of her kind.

Remembering her obsequiousness of two days before, Eleazer put on his severest and princeliest manner.

"Fetch me some breakfast and notify *M. le Marquis* that I wish to see him as soon as I have finished."

"*Oui, monseigneur*," said the sister readily.

As soon as the door closed behind her Eleazer climbed out of bed. The room swam round him as he staggered from the bedpost to the nearest chair. But compared with yesterday his strength was as the strength of ten. In another day or so he would be strong enough to travel—or escape.

Reaching the door of the clothes-closet, he looked inside. As he had feared, it was absolutely empty. There was neither dresser nor wardrobe left in the room, nor a stitch of clothing except the nightgown on his back. Even though the weather had grown sunny and warm again he would need more than that to travel in.

No other second-story room could have been easier to escape from than that guest-chamber at Judge Pliny Moore's. Its unbarred and unbolted windows opened on

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the sloping roof of the Summer kitchen, from which a child could drop into the backyard.

But backyard, barn and stable were swarming with white-coated Swiss mercenaries. Their tents were pitched in the pasture beyond and in the grounds on either side of the Moore house. There was not a redcoat nor a Canadian to be seen.

"This may be Colonel Meuron's headquarters or the Marquis de Fenouil's," said Eleazer to himself. "But it certainly isn't Sir George Prevost's."

He remained for perhaps three minutes at the window. Then footsteps on the uncarpeted stairs made him hurry back to bed and pull up the covers just in time. He swallowed every drop and crumb of the breakfast without remembering his throat; the soreness had almost gone.

But it was a weak-looking invalid who feebly greeted the marquis when the nurse had gone and de Fenouil entered.

"What was the cause of that cheering just now? A British victory?"

"A victory indeed! The capital and stronghold of democracy has fallen. This Jacobin rag admits it."

Producing a copy of the New York *Evening Post*—which staid Federalist journal would have raved editorially for a week if it had heard what the marquis miscalled it—de Fenouil handed the paper to Eleazer. Beneath great headlines almost an inch high was the brief story of the defeat at Bladensburg, the burning of the public buildings at Washington, and the advance of the British army on Baltimore.

"It is the end," declared the marquis dramatically.

"It is only the beginning," retorted Eleazer. "The American people will fight all the harder to avenge this act of vandalism."

"But their capital is gone—their Government dispersed—their President a fugitive. Could France resist without Paris or Austria without Vienna? When the heart is pierced, the limbs may move convulsively for a little while but no more. In America as in Europe democracy has received its death-blow.

"And yet, to quote your royal highness' words, this is only the beginning. Washington has fallen; Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston will soon share its fate. A mighty fleet is now ravaging the New England coast on its way to the doomed city of New York there to join hands with the great army now encamped about us. Another fleet and army will take New Orleans and Louisiana.

"England will retake the so-called State of New York and occupy the entire Mississippi Valley. New England is on the point of seceding and making a separate peace. The humbled remnant of this wretched country will be a power of the fourth class, impotent for future mischief.

"Moreover, the rebellious subjects of the King of Spain in Mexico and South America are to be chastised into obedience. Everywhere the last sparks of Jacobinism and democracy are to be stamped out and extinguished forever. A Holy Alliance to uphold the divine right of kings will be formed by the exalted representatives about to meet at Vienna.

"The nightmare of revolution has passed. The great principle of legitimacy has triumphed. The rightful rulers of mankind are seated more firmly than ever on their thrones."

DE FENOUIL'S voice rang with the fervor of absolute conviction. For him the clock had stopped in 1789 and now was ticking again precisely as if nothing had happened. He was the archetype of the ultra-conservatives of the First Restoration, the men who were aptly called "more royalist than the king."

"Your royal highness," he resumed in a quieter tone.

But Eleazer stopped him.

"Please do not address me by that empty and meaningless title. As an American citizen I am plain Mr. Eleazer Williams. As the son of Louis XVI I am the King of France."

Dazed and bewildered as he had been the day before, this obvious fact had then escaped him. But in the morning he saw it plain. The very numeral of the reigning monarch admitted his nephew's prior right; Louis XVIII was avowedly the successor of Louis XVII. The latter's unlooked-for resurrection had placed the champions of legitimacy and divine right in the awkwardest of predicaments.

But the Marquis de Fenouil was never awkward.

"M. [illegible]s is of the Apostolic Catholic faith?" [illegible]d.

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"I am a Congregationalist and a candidate for the ministry," answered Eleazer.

"M. Williams is a believer in the divine right of kings?"

"I believe in the right of the people to rule themselves. I know no divine right save that of the King of Heaven."

"Monsieur would proclaim those interesting principles from the throne of France?"

"I would not change them for a thousand thrones."

"Yet *monsieur* expects to be anointed, crowned and enthroned at Reims?"

"I expect," said Eleazer grimly, "that you are wishing you had kept quiet and let the English shoot or hang me, as you said."

An extraordinary change came over the hitherto placid mask of de Fenouil's features. For the first time his face showed strong emotion. The blasé marquis was genuinely shocked and horrified.

"Are we Jacobins to suffer the sacred blood of St. Louis to be shed? As soon as his Majesty learned of your existence and your peril he interceded with the Prince Regent of England on your behalf, and bade me hasten to the rescue as I had before.

"Had we been such monsters as you seem to think us, *monsieur*, then why did we not leave you to perish by disease or assassination in the Temple? Would that not have been simpler in the first place?"

"That's so," admitted Eleazer. "And I forgot to thank you for that, marquis. It was a mighty brave thing you did, and mighty well planned and executed, up to the time your man Bellanger lost his head. I know how it feels to have an agent fail you at the last minute. People on the outside never do appreciate our work."

"Indeed they do not!" affirmed the mollified de Fenouil. "Permit me to congratulate *monsieur* on the achievements of his Secret Corps, and particularly on his own audacity and finesse, of which I have often heard the English officers express the warmest opinions. They realize now that it required a de Fenouil to catch an El—Elé——"

The Puritan name was too much for a Parisian tongue.

"El-e-a-zer," Williams pronounced it slowly for him. "Eleazer the First," he added and smiled at the incongruous combination.

"Precisely!" cried the marquis, "*Monsieur* himself perceives the impossibility."

"Of what—of talking about legitimacy and excluding the legitimate heir?"

"Of crowning a democrat and enthroning a republican," retorted de Fenouil. "Have all the nations of Europe labored for a quarter of a century to overthrow Jacobinism in France only to acclaim *le bon Roi* Eleazer, citizen of the United States? Have we driven out Bonaparte to make room for a Yankee? Can England recognize a king on whose head she has set a price, or the Pope make a new concordat with a Huguenot minister?"

"Nevertheless I am the rightful King of France."

"Admitted," answered the marquis frankly. "So is George III the rightful King of England. But is he permitted to reign? No, for he is insane."

"Then you threaten me with an insane asylum?" demanded Eleazer.

"*Pas du tout!* I am merely drawing an analogy. But indeed a mad king would be better suited to the mad English than a Yankee democrat to the throne of France. Therefore a certain document has been drawn up which I now have the honor to submit for your consideration."

The marquis clapped his hands three times. A lean, rat-faced man in a brown wig and white uniform entered obsequiously.

"My traveling-desk, Doisy."

Doisy withdrew, to return with a brass-bound rosewood box, which at a sign from his master be placed on the octagonal table beside the bed. Then he effaced himself as the marquis drew out a pair of keys.

The first unlocked the box, the second the writing-desk into which the box was neatly transformed when opened and unfolded. Lifting the sloping lid of the desk, de Fenouil touched a hidden spring and a secret drawer flew open with a click. From it the marquis took a folded manuscript which he placed in Eleazer's hand.

Unfolding the document, Eleazer found that it consisted of a large sheet of parchment, beautifully engrossed in double parallel columns of French and English. While he was reading it he observed that the marquis was setting out pens, ink, sealing-wax and a silver seal on the table.

It was a solemn abdication of the crown of France in favor of Louis Stanislas Xavier, styled Louis XVIII, by Eleazer Williams or Charles Louis, the son of Louis XVI, himself styled Louis XVII, King of France and

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Navarre, with many accompanying names and titles of honor, together with a minute specification in legal terms of the conditions, considerations and provisos upon which the abdication was made.

These were, in brief, that Eleazer Williams should be publicly recognized as the son of Louis XVI, granted the title of Duke of Normandy and a pension of five million francs a year for as long as he should live, either in France or America.

Five million francs—one million dollars a year! The combined incomes of the then five richest men in the United States would have fallen short of that stupendous stipend. What could a poor divinity student do with such vast wealth?

THE answer was not long in coming. Eleazer saw the fulfilment of his dearest dream—the salvation and redemption of his foster-father's people. He saw a shining vision of mission churches in the forest and on the western prairies, schools and colleges to train up ministers, doctors and leaders of their own race, not only for the Mohawks and their brethren of the Long House but for all the Indians, rescued from savagery and paganism to civilization and Christianity. To rear this mighty bulwark for their protection he had only to sign his name.

And what would he be giving up? Only a crown he could never wear. Though every other obstacle were removed, his religious convictions would bar him from the throne of Catholic France. The Huguenot founder of the House of Bourbon had lightly changed his faith because "Paris was worth a mass." But Henry of Navarre was decidedly no Puritan.

And Eleazer Williams was. Bourbon by birth, Mohawk by adoption, he had been trained and schooled in New England. To promote piety and education, turn his back on a throne, and make a handsome profit by so doing—what possible combination of motives could have appealed more perfectly to the Yankee mind?

Eleazer took up the pen.

As if the touch of the quill had closed some psychic circuit, there swept through his entire being a tremendous surge of scorn and anger and outraged pride. Now he knew what he had modestly wondered at before, why the Iroquois had deemed him worthy to be a chief. Now he knew that he was indeed the son of a king. Now he knew that he could never barter away his birthright and the heritage of his unborn children.

A half-forgotten scrap of history came to his mind as he flung down the pen and turned to the marquis.

"Take to your master his own answer to the ambassador of Napoleon at Warsaw when the usurper sought to purchase his abdication—

" 'Though I am in poverty and exile I will not sacrifice my honor.' "

"Magnificent," murmured de Fenouil. "To think that a reply so apt and spirited must be lost to history! Born under a happier star, *monsieur* would have been a king indeed. As it is; did *monsieur* ever hear of the twin brother of Louis XIV?"

"I never heard of such a person."

"He is better known as the Man in the Iron Mask."

A cold, dank breath from an Old World dungeon seemed to chill and poison the air of the sunlit room.

"He suffered from the delusion that he was the elder-born. He had the misfortune to believe that he was the rightful king. For the peace of France and the security of the dynasty it was necessary to take certain measures. *Monsieur* perceives——"

"Enough of this hocus-pocus!" interrupted Eleazer. "We are not in medieval France but in Clinton County, New York, in the nineteenth century. I am an American citizen and an officer of the United States Government."

"Pardon me, but there is no longer any such Government. And this house is French soil as long as I remain here. I have ambassadorial powers; *monsieur* is one of my suite. As soon as his health permits we shall go to Montreal, where a French frigate lies at anchor in the St. Lawrence."

"The Canadian authorities will never permit you to abduct a prisoner of war. I shall appeal to Sir George Prevost."

"*Monsieur* may find communication somewhat difficult," said de Fenouil dryly. "The good Sir George has no official knowledge of *monsieur's* presence, nor does he desire enlightenment."

"He knows perfectly well that I have been captured by his rangers," retorted Eleazer. "Those men would have lost no time claiming the reward which the Governor-General has been offering for so long."

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"Those men were indeed well rewarded. But could *monsieur* identify any of them or prove that they were in the Canadian service?"

Eleazer realized that he would find it extremely difficult. His only evidence was that the men in question spoke *habitant* French—as did a good many thousand others on both sides of the line. His only possible witness was Selwyn, a renegade spy of low degree and lower repute.

And to cite his testimony would be to confess that he, Eleazer Williams, had been forewarned of the raid and had suffered himself to be captured. Which would naturally throw discredit on the documents that had been captured with him and destroy their hoped-for effect on Sir George Prevost. At all costs the forged dispatches must be given their chance to delay the invading host by raising imaginary terrors in the mind's eye of its timorous and overapprehensive commander.

And why had the British Government placed this notoriously incompetent and unsoldierly politician in command of this splendid army of seasoned veterans except as the price of his complicity in the intrigue with Louis XVIII? It would have been practically impossible to kidnap Eleazer Williams into Canada and smuggle him out again without the connivance of the Governor-General.

Sir George Prevost had altogether too much local authority and too lively a personal hatred of the Yankee master spy for him to be left out of the plot. Moreover, he was in high favor with the Prince Regent, from whom he might well have received direct, private instructions without the knowledge of Downing Street. There was more underground intrigue than pitiless publicity in those good old days of the Regency and the Family Compact.

De Fenouil picked up the unsigned parchment, placed it carefully in an inner pocket and walked backward to the door.

"Why are you leaving this?" asked Eleazer, indicating the desk.

"*Monsieur* may yet find it useful," hinted the marquis blandly as he went out.

THEN came the bald-headed doctor to make his morning visit. Beaming with honest joy, he pronounced his distinguished patient so much improved that he would be ready to travel by the next day. Eleazer privately decided to travel before that.

But there were difficulties in the way of his departure. Instead of the Sister of Charity he now had a male nurse—a bull-necked young Swiss who looked as if he had been the rough-and-tumble champion of three or four cantons before he took to soldiering. Nevertheless the meek and slender Eleazer might have given him some surprizes in the wrestling line, could the two have finished a bout without interference.

But presently came the thump of a lowered musket-butt on the bare planks of the hall. When the door was opened and the luncheon-tray passed in Eleazer caught the glimpse he had expected of a sentry posted outside. The captive of the Temple was again a closely guarded prisoner.

Useless to wait till the nurse bent solicitously over him and then try to choke the fellow into insensibility and escape in his clothes. Even with the deadliest possible grip on the wind-pipe, there would be more than enough kicking and thrashing about to fetch in the dullest sentry. Useless also to make a sudden dash from the bed and out through the open window, with the alarm being shouted an instant afterward to the regiment encamped about the house.

All the long afternoon and through the night Eleazer lay awake, thinking and listening. He heard the sentry outside the door being relieved every two hours. The bull-necked nurse went off duty and came on again. Toward morning the nurse was startled out of a light doze by his patient's suddenly asking—

"What is all that noise out there in the stables?"

"They are saddling the horses and harnessing the coach-team for a journey, excellency," said the Swiss in a jargon that was two-fifths French and three-fifths German, each strongly flavored with the other's accent.

"To Montreal?"

"So they say in the stable-yard, excellency."

"Quick, go to the Marquis de Fenouil. Say that I wish him to come at once and bring the document I would not sign yesterday."

"But, excellency, my orders forbid me to leave the room."

"Leave the door open so that the sentry can see, and warn him to be alert. What

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harm can follow then? There will be a gold piece for you if you are brisk."

"I will make haste, excellency."

Leaving the sentry standing on the threshold and staring into the dim candle-lit room, the bull-necked youth hurried down-stairs. Presently he returned in the wake of de Fenouil, who now wore the splendid white uniform of the Garde du Corps and was booted and spurred for the road. Ordering the two Swiss to remain in the hall, the marquis closed the door.

"*Monsieur* has reconsidered?" he asked.

"I am not going with you to Montreal."

"I am desolated at the loss of *monsieur's* company. But we must have another witness to the signing. Colonel Meuron is below, and——"

De Fenouil stopped abruptly. Hard, strong fingers were gripping his throat from behind too tightly for him to utter the slightest sound. His first thought was that Eleazer had leaped up and attacked him.

But no; Eleazer was still in bed, propped up on one elbow and gazing sympathetically into de Fenouil's starting, bloodshot eyes, which soon ceased to see anything at all.

When the marquis reopened them, he found himself lying in the bed and looking at himself standing in the middle of the room. Then he realized that it was Eleazer Williams wearing the white uniform and the powdered wig. Both men were about the same height and build, and Eleazer had copied de Fenouil's bearing and expression until the resemblance would have deceived almost any one—by candle-light.

The marquis tried to cry out, and discovered that he was gagged. He tried to rise, and found that he was spread-eagled. Each of his wrists and ankles was bound to the nearest bed-post by a cord running under the bedclothes or the pillows and drawn so tight that he could hardly stir.

Buttoning the last button of his white coat, Eleazer walked with a light mincing step to the door and opened it. The sentry presented arms.

"Call the sergeant of the guard," said Eleazer as he acknowledged the salute.

De Fenouil felt his heart leap into his throat with the shock of hearing his own voice from another's lips. Standing with his back to the candle-light and his face toward the unlighted hallway, Eleazer was in little danger of being recognized by the sleepy, dull-witted mercenaries.

THE sentry gave a resounding call that soon brought a fat *Wachtmeister* puffing up the stairs.

"Sergeant, the prisoner complains that he can not sleep with an attendant in his room. Instead you will post a sentry on the kitchen roof, outside his windows, as soon as I leave the room. But not before—till then I myself will be responsible, and I desire no eavesdroppers.

"Also countermand the order for the coach. It will not be needed."

"And the saddle-horses, excellency?"

"Have mine and my servant's brought to the door. And send my man Doisy here to me."

"*Zu befehl, Excellenz.*"

The *Wachtmeister* waddled zealously down-stairs. Eleazer turned to his late nurse, who was lingering expectantly.

"Here is something for you from the gentleman."

"Many thanks, excellency," said the bull-necked youth, catching the gold-piece and swallowing a yawn as he hurried away to bed.

Eleazer closed the door, turned to the darkest corner of the bedroom and beckoned. Out of the shadows glided a naked savage with a naked knife.

"My brother," said Eleazer proudly, placing his arm affectionately across Tallow Jack's bare shoulders.

The two made a strange picture to de Fenouil's wondering eyes. In the white uniform of the Garde du Corps, with jeweled orders on his chest and sword by his side, the son of Louis XVI looked a king indeed. The sight of him embracing the dark-skinned savage brought back memories of ridiculous old revolutionary phrases about equality and the brotherhood of man.

Footsteps pattered briskly up the stairs. Placing his knife between his teeth like a pirate, Tallow Jack melted into the dark corner by the hinge-side of the door.

Some one knocked respectfully on the panel.

"Enter," called Eleazer from across the room.

Doisy came in and closed the door behind him. Then a look of astonishment leaped to his eyes as they saw, what no others could have seen so swiftly and surely, the difference between his master's figure and that of the man now standing before him

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with averted face and wearing his master's clothes.

But Tallow Jack was equally swift and sure. Before poor Doisy could open his lips his throat was clutched by the half-breed's terrible fingers. Fascinated, de Fenouil watched and saw how he himself had been choked into insensibility without the slightest sound to alarm the sentry.

Lowering his limp and senseless victim carefully to the floor, the half-breed knelt on him, seized him by the hair, snatched the scalping-knife out from between his own teeth and before Eleazer could stop him swept it around the top of the valet's skull.

The blasé marquis shuddered to see the naked brute rip off the scalp and brandish it, while he grinned over his shoulder at the pale and horrified faces of the white men. His grin grew broader and broader as the others gradually realized that the knife-blade was still bright and clean and that Doisy had lost nothing but his wig.

Having had his little joke, Tallow Jack settled down to business. In something less than a minute he stripped the unconscious Doisy as bare as himself, bound and gagged him with the remnants of his own suit of buckskin, carried him into the clothes closet and left him there.

Then with unchecked speed he began to put on the valet's clothes. His own buckskins had been cut into thongs for the benefit of the two Frenchmen.

"You may be interested to know, *M. le Marquis,*" said Eleazer, "that one of my secret agents was on hand to watch me being carried ashore from that sloop and into this house. You should have had the place guarded by better woodsmen than these mercenaries if you wanted to keep out Yankee rangers and Mohawk scouts.

"Another one of my men was up in that big elm in the back yard and saw me at the window yesterday morning. He and I had quite a talk before I went back to bed. My brother here slid between your heavy-footed sentries and slipped in through the window while the nurse was pouring me out a glass of water. Once inside, he squatted down in that dark corner over there and paid strict attention to what I told him.

"And I'm very obliged to you, *M. le Marquis,* for the things you've told me. Better lie back now and take a good rest, for you've probably got a long wait ahead of you.

"If it wasn't for my duty to my country I'd stay a while and try to attend to your urgent spiritual needs. A man can't be the King of France and Chief of the Secret Corps and a servant of the Lord all at once and do the work of all three properly. May you spend the next few hours in earnest reflection and silent prayer. Good-by, and the peace of the Lord be with you."

With which sincere and well-meant benediction Eleazer pressed the other's bound hand and blew out the candle. De Fenouil heard him go out, followed by Tallow Jack. The sentry's musket snapped up in salute and thumped back to the floor, but that was all. The marquis realized that it was too dark in the hall for the Swiss to see that the second man was not Doisy.

De Fenouil heard the two go downstairs. Through the window came the sound of the new sentry scrambling up on the kitchen roof and of horses walking down the gravel drive and trotting away on the road.

Then the marquis leaned back and gave himself up to earnest reflections but not exactly to silent prayer.

CHAPTER X

AN ARMY OF LIONS

"WHERE are the redcoats?" asked Eleazer as he and Tallow Jack rode southward on Main Street from the Moore house.

Those cheers he had heard the day before were unmistakably British; a brigade at least by the strength of the roar. Yet there were no troops now in evidence in Champlain village except the exotic-looking Swiss.

"All down to Sampson's," answered Tallow Jack, naming a well-known roadside tavern about eight miles south on the Plattsburg road.

"What day is this?"

"Tuesday, Septemb' six'."

This was an astonishing state of affairs. The invaders had crossed the line and occupied Champlain on August twenty-ninth. Since then they had taken eight days to march eight miles through an open, tolerably well-roaded and utterly undefended countryside. And these were the picked veterans of Wellington's hard-fighting, swift-striding Peninsulars. It would have

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puzzled Napoleon himself to account for such a paralysis.

But it was perfectly simple to Tallow Jack.

"Their medicine no good; your medicine heap strong," he remarked succinctly.

Ordinarily such a lapse into paganism would have brought down a sermon on his head. But this time Eleazer overlooked it. Tallow Jack had hit the psychological bull's-eye. Those false dispatches had indeed been strong medicine. And while they were raising fantom foes in Sir George Prevost's mind his real enemies were being given time to assemble.

"Has General Mooers called out his militia yet?"

Tallow Jack grunted affirmatively.

"Down to Beekmanstown, las' night. Fight to-day, mebbeso."

"Foot-race, more likely," said Eleazer.

Green militiamen with their flanks in the air, ten miles of empty road in their rear and at least ten thousand British regulars less than three miles from their front could hardly be expected to linger or be blamed for running away. Why on earth they were at Beekmanstown at all instead of with the regulars at Plattsburg was more than Eleazer could understand. But nothing could have been more convenient for his escape.

"Fall behind, and remember that you are my orderly," he said to Tallow Jack as they reached the end of the village and approached the bridge over the Big Chazy.

"There is a picket on the bridge; I can see the sergeant's lantern and hear them moving about."

Trusting to his disguise, he rode boldly up to the bridge-head.

"*Wer da?*" barked the sentry's guttural challenge.

"*Le Marquis de Fenouil.*"

"Pass, *Excellenz!*" interposed the *Wachtmeister* obsequiously and without waiting for password or countersign.

Having crossed the river, the two brothers spurred their horses to a trot and then to a gallop up the slope of the long, low ridge between the Big and Little Chazy. The dirt road was trampled by the feet of thousands of men and cattle, and rutted to a depth that told of long wagon-trains and many batteries of artillery.

A single horseman could still find fairly good going by keeping to the side of the road and picking his way. But the next rain would turn the dusty, torn-up strip of earth into an almost impassible quagmire.

It was still dark when they reached the village of Chazy, five miles from Champlain. Candles were burning in most of the houses. Front doors swung open and tall, shakoed figures, outlined against the yellow rectangles of light, stumbled out yawning and grumbling into the unlit street. Orderlies were leading horses up to the houses where officers were quartered, and the drivers of a commissariat ox-cart train that had parked overnight in the village square were profanely yoking up their lumbering teams.

Nobody paid the slightest attention to Eleazer and Tallow Jack until they reached the end of the village and the bridge over the Little Chazy. There they discovered the difference between Swiss mercenaries and British regulars.

"Halt! Dismount! Who goes there?"

"The Marquis de Fenouil."

"Advance, one, and give the countersign. Advance, *one*, I said!" cautioned the sentry, bringing his Brown Bess to the ready as Tallow Jack tried to edge after Eleazer.

Ignoring the order to dismount, Eleazer walked his horse to where the light from the sergeant's lantern could reveal his richly laced white uniform and the orders on his chest.

"I am the Marquis de Fenouil, the French military attaché. I am expected for breakfast at Sir George Prevost's headquarters."

"Sorry, sir, but my orders are to let no one pass at night without the word," said the sergeant firmly. "You'll have to wait till daybreak, sir."

But that was exactly what Eleazer could not afford to do. Daylight would betray his masquerade to any one well acquainted with the real de Fenouil, who at any moment might escape from his bonds and set pursuers on the fugitives' trail.

Even as that thought came to his mind, Eleazer heard half a dozen riders approaching rapidly from behind him.

HIS first impulse was to snatch the two horse-pistols from his saddle-holsters, shoot down the sentry and the sergeant and make a dash for it. But there were three or four other redcoats on the bridge; and even if he got by himself Tallow Jack would certainly be captured or bayoneted. Better to turn back, make

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a détour and ford the creek somewhere up-stream.

"*Eh bien*, my good fellow, I shall return at dawn," he said carelessly and rode away from the bridge, followed by his supposed orderly.

He dared not leave the road till they were assuredly out of sight of the picket; and wearing a white coat is almost as bad for night-work as carrying a torch. Before the two Americans could turn aside they had attracted the attention of the horsemen coming from the village.

"Hallo there!" hailed a pleasant young English voice. "Is that you, *M. le Marquis?*"

"*Mais certainement*," answered Eleazer, ready to fire and bolt for it if this were a trap. "Your sergeant will not let me pass—I have forgotten the *consigne*."

"I say, that's too bad," sympathized the Englishman, while a ripple of laughter went up from his companions. "Fall in with us, sir, and we'll see you through."

Eleazer fell in, devoutly and silently thanking his Maker. These were no pursuers but some of the officers quartered overnight in Chazy village, now riding out to join their commands before reveille roll-call.

"I'm Major Brandsby, of the staff," said the first speaker. "Don't suppose you remember me, sir, since that dinner at Martigny's in Montreal. Let me present Major Statham and Captain Allen of the Nineteenth Light Dragoons, Doctor Mifflin, Major Brown of the Commissariat and Chaplain Broadwood of the Buffs."

Cold chills sped up and down Eleazer's spine as it bent in a Gallic bow. This was not his first meeting with Chaplain Broadwood; they had met before when Eleazer was disguised as a young seminary priest from Montreal.

He had passed muster then, though under suspicion, and the chaplain had been told who his erudite fellow-theologian was a few minutes after Eleazer had made his escape. How could he escape now should the chaplain see his face after daybreak and remember?

However, there was nothing for it but to go ahead with the adventure. Luckily their comparative rank put him at the head of the little column, beside the staff officer, and the chaplain at the tail, two paces ahead of Tallow Jack.

In this order they rode the bridge, where young Brandsby gave the countersign—

"Vittoria."

"I thought you were returning to Montreal today, sir," he said after they had crossed the creek.

"So I had intended. But I changed my plans on the rumor of an advance and perhaps a battle. I am curious to see how the Americans fight."

"Deuced well at some times and deuced badly at others. I saw their 11th Infantry meet our 100th Foot bayonet to bayonet at Chippewa and break them and roll them back. And no troops in Europe could have stormed our batteries on the hill above Lundy's Lane in better style.

"But their raw levies are a wretched lot. It will be hardly worth your while to ride all the way to Beekmanstown just to see one volley and a cloud of dust."

"We are to attack the hamlet of that name?"

"General Power's brigade and half of General Robinson's are to advance through Beekmanstown, General Brisbane's by the lake road. The two columns will unite at the cross-roads a little this side of Plattsburg. If the Yankees hold up either of our columns, the other will soon outflank them and make them run for it or be cut off."

"They'll cut and run for it, never fear," growled the sardonic Major Statham. "We've wasted too much time over the —— rascals already. Good day, gentlemen. Captain Allen and I turn off here."

The two cavalry officers turned from the road into a meadow where the faint red glow of the dying camp-fires revealed long rows of picketed gray horses and gleamed on the polished brass helmets of the sentinels. Then a trumpet began to sound the reveille, and the bivouac of the 19th Light Dragoons sprang into sudden life.

Drums and fifes and light-infantry bugles took up the refrain farther along the road. As the dawn was breaking Eleazer found himself riding past the camp of the French Canadian voltigeurs and chasseurs.

Nor did he ride past unnoticed. The sight of his white uniform and tricorn roused glorious memories of the *Ancien Régime* that brought every swarthy, swaggering rifleman running to the roadside, waving his cap and shouting:

"*Vive la France! Vive le Roi!*"

They were cheering the representative of the restored Bourbons; but for one glorious

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moment they made him feel a king himself. There by the waters of Champlain, where thousands had fought and died for France in the old wars, Louis XVII rode with a swelling heart and tear-filled eyes, acknowledged and acclaimed.

HE WAS brought abruptly back to the present by a fierce, exultant burst of song. Out of the grove where they had already broken camp swung the Frontier Light Infantry, headed by their field music. United Empire Loyalists to a man, hard-fighting sons of embittered Tory exiles, they sang as they marched the vengeful words of "The Noble Lads of Canada:"

"Oh, now the time has come, my boys, to cross the Yankee line!
We remember they were rebels once and conquered John Burg'yne;
We'll subdue these mighty democrats and pull their dwellings down;
And we'll have the States inhabited with subjects to the crown."

Expressing these sentiments at the top of their lungs, the Frontier Light Infantry halted and stood at ease directly before a small, ramshackle log cabin, from whose open doorway a young, slatternly but exceedingly pretty woman frowned at them with undisguised hostility and scorn. No one molested her or made the slightest attempt to "pull her dwelling down"—a feat that any four Canadians there could have performed in as many minutes. They sang or grinned at her, but nothing more.

The incident was typical of the whole invasion. Evil and cruelty stained the record of both sides at other times and places during that war. Numberless curses have been heaped on the head of Sir George Prevost. But let it be remembered to his and his army's credit that theirs was a clean campaign.

Spurring ahead of the halted column, Eleazer and his companions pressed on through the increasing jam of wagon-trains, ox-carts and droves of beef-cattle on the road. Soon the commissary left them, and then the medical officer.

Mile after mile of crowded wagons commandeered from Yankee farmers and laden with beef, biscuit, rum, powder, shot, blankets and the thousand other necessities of an army in the field clogged the road and shut off the light infantry and the dragoons from the front, where the heavy columns of line regiments were moving forward without a trooper or a skirmisher to cover their advance.

"An army of lions," said Eleazer to himself as they overtook one superb battalion of regulars after another, "commanded by a deer, and an amateur deer at that."

"There's headquarters," said his companion, pointing to Sampson's tavern.

Its porch was crowded with officers in brilliant uniforms, its unfenced yard with their chargers and the horses of their mounted orderlies.

"You are breakfasting with Sir George, of course?" asked the major.

"Not if I can escape," replied the pseudo marquis earnestly. "To place one of your so hearty English breakfasts, cooked by a villainous Yankee, on top of what I have already eaten would give me indigestion for the rest of the day. *Au revoir, mon cher* Brandsby, and make my excuses for me to Sir George."

"Indigestion my hat!" thought the aide-de-camp as he dismounted before the tavern. "His face is as healthy a pink and white as any schoolgirl's. And I thought the marquis was a rouged-up old roué. I must have been fearfully drunk that night in Montreal."

He entered the tavern and was working his way through the crowded hall toward the dining-room, intent on breakfast, when the door of that room flew open and out popped Sir George Prevost, napkin in hand.

"Was that the Marquis de Fenouil rode past just now?" he demanded excitedly.

"Yes, sir."

"What the deuce is he doing down here? Ride after him and say that I wish to see him at once."

"Have him here in a jiffy, sir," cried Brandsby cheerily as he turned on his spurred heel and sped down the lane that was opened for him to the front door.

But his horse had already been taken to the barn by an overzealous groom. When the young aide-de-camp had hurried after him, mounted and ridden forth, he could see plenty of red coats on the road but not a single white one. Perceiving Chaplain Broadwood riding at a foot-pace a couple of furlongs ahead on the right side of the road, Brandsby spurred after and overtook him.

"I say, *padre*, have you seen the marquis?"

"Yes; he and his orderly nipped through

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between two companies of the 88th over to the other side of the road just as I was about to speak to him. Then the two of them galloped off like winking, around that corner ahead there. Anything wrong?"

"Only that Sir George wants to see him at once at that tavern. Would you mind looking him up on the Beekmanstown road while I take the other?"

"Not in the least. Bound that way already," said the sporting chaplain of the Buffs, who never let his regiment go into action without him.

For a mile or so Broadwood and Brandsby sped on together till they came to the fork in the road. There the aide-de-camp swerved to the east and pressed his hunter for all it was worth till he overtook the halted rear-guard of Brisbane's column.

"Seen two men in white coats ride by, my lads?"

"Seen 'un ride in there, sir," chorused half a company, pointing to the wooded slope on the right.

"Deuced queer doin's," soliloquized the young Englishman, casting about for spoor. "Ah, here's where they went, over the ridge by this old wood-road."

Topping the crest of the low divide, he looked down and saw through the green the scarlet of the British troops on the Beekmanstown road, and, half-way between, a fast-moving patch of white. Galloping after at a reckless pace for a rough downgrade, he halloed:

"*Pardonnez-moi, M. le Marquis! Attendez un moment, s'il vous plaît!*"

"Tally-ho!" came a cheerful hail from below, in the well-known tones of the sporting chaplain.

"Good for the *padre*—he'll head him off. Hallo, what's that?"

A PISTOL-SHOT rang out, followed by two others close together, and a roar of excited voices. Down the last fifty yards of the slope plunged Brandsby's hunter and out into the Beekmanstown road, about twenty yards in front of the advance guard of the Buffs. Swinging to the left, the aide-de-camp found himself pounding along the road side by side with the dust-covered and wrathful chaplain.

"Lost his hat and wig in the woods—knew the fellow at once!" spluttered Broadwood.

"Who, the marquis?"

"Marquis be—blessed! Last time he was a priest. Suspected him then, learned about him later, remembered him now. So did Colonel Willington, who had just ridden up at the head of the regiment. Had the fellow hemmed in between us.

"I reached for his collar and he knocked me clean out of my saddle. Never knew he could box—never can tell what he'll be up to next. Dissenting minister, too. Credit to the cloth, hang him!"

"Hang whom?" demanded the bewildered Brandsby.

"Eleazer Williams."

"My word!"

"Colonel and somebody else let fly with their barkers—didn't hit anything. Men couldn't fire without shooting down their own mounted officers and the orderlies out in front. Away went Williams and his man with our fellows after them. There they are now!"

Rounding a turn in the road, they saw seven or eight red-coated riders hard on the track of the white-coated spies.

"Dangerous work," commented Brandsby. "Run slap into the Yankee outposts any minute."

"Ran slap into ours, you mean!" retorted the chaplain. "Bagged them both, by Jove!"

Out of the woods on either side of the road poured brass-helmeted, scarlet-coated dragoons, just in time to cut off and surround the two fugitives.

"Too bad when they were making such a plucky run for it," said that true-hearted sportsman Broadwood.

"Too good, I'm afraid," drawled the aide-de-camp. "Ye-es, altogether too good. And so thinks Colonel Willington evidently."

"Why, he and the others are turning back!"

"And I fancy you and I had better turn back also, *padre*, unless you want to see the inside of a Yankee prison."

"But—but I don't understand!" protested the bewildered chaplain.

"Remember where we passed the 19th Light Dragoons at sunrise?" asked Brandsby. "Remember all the carts and trains on the road afterwards? How could our troopers get from back there to over yonder by this time unless their mounts sprouted wings and flew?"

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"Do you mean to say that those fellows ahead are——"

"New York State Dragoons. The Yankee militiaman seems to wear any uniform that strikes his errant fancy. I only hope that those fools in scarlet ride up to some of their own infantry and get jolly well peppered for it."

CHAPTER XI

AN ARMY OF DEER

AFTER shaking hands with their rescuers—Captain Safford's troop of the Essex Dragoons—Eleazer and Tallow Jack rode on toward Beekmanstown. The sun was high and the thick white coats were hot, no longer necessary, and exceedingly likely to draw the fire of some puzzled militiaman. Taking his coat off as he rode, Eleazer was about to throw it into the wayside bushes when he caught the faint crackle of parchment.

From the inside pocket he drew the unsigned abdication which he had asked de Fenouil to bring to him that morning.

"This will be a useful bit of evidence when I claim my throne," he said to himself as he thrust the document inside his shirt.

Five minutes later they were challenged by a picket of the 37th New York, just as the outposts were ordered to fall back on the main body on the outskirts of Beekmanstown.

Seven hundred militiamen in at least seventeen kinds of uniform were drawn up behind two moss-covered stone walls that converged to make an obtuse re-entrant angle bisected by the road, where a masked battery of two six-pounders was supported by two hundred and fifty regulars under Major Wool of the 13th United States Infantry. Riding fussily back and forth on his big white mare and resplendent in the fullest of full-dress militia uniforms was General Mooers.

"By granny, but I'm glad to see you and Jack back safe and sound," he said as he wrung Eleazer's hand. "Been worrying a heap about you boys. Are the Britishers advancing?"

"In force. They will be here in twenty minutes or half an hour, five thousand strong."

"Good land of Goshen! However, guess we might as well stay and have a crack at 'em. Lie down and keep quiet, everybody. Walk your horses in back of those trees where the gun-teams are. Hold on a minute. Have you two had anything to eat this morning?"

"No, sir."

"Thought you were looking kind of peaked. Here you are, one apiece."

Out of a bulging saddle-bag the general pulled a mighty pair of cold roast turkey drumsticks, and a second joint for himself. Dismounting and tying his mare behind a clump of willows, he sat down, carefully parting his gold-laced coat-tails, and gnawed away contentededly.

"Here they come! Here they come!" ran an excited murmur along the wall.

"Shet up and keep your heads down, you gabbling ganders!" snapped General Mooers. "Look to your priming, and wait till I give the word."

Peeping through the thick screen of leaves, Eleazer saw a long red column of British infantry swinging steadily toward them up the road. Presently he was able to distinguish the well-known pale-yellow facings of the leading regiment—the Buffs.

There was no cavalry screen to shield the head of the column, nor any flankers. Except for a small advance guard of infantry thrown out a scant pistol-shot in front the redcoats might have been marching through their own instead of through the enemy's country. It was typically, magnificently, insolently English.

On they came until the point of the unsuspecting advance guard was almost within the jaws of the angle.

"Give it to 'em, for the honor of Clinton County!" shouted General Mooers.

Up sprang his men, each resting his gun on top of the wall before him and waiting till he saw something red against his foresight before he pulled trigger. Many were busy reloading before the last rattle and crash of the ragged, prolonged discharge had died away.

Down went the advance guard of the Buffs, almost to a man. The leading companies of the main body staggered beneath the unexpected blow. But they rallied and sprang forward with a cheer as their colonel cried:

"Give them the bayonet! Follow me, lads!"

Splendidly handsome and superbly

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mounted, Willington of the Buffs led his men at a charging pace straight for the blue-coated American regulars now forming up across the road. Holding their ground, these fired a rolling volley of "buck and ball" just as the two hidden six-pounders swept the road with a round-shot and a stand of grape apiece.

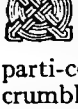
Two companies of the Buffs were torn to pieces and their charge was broken, but their colonel was still unhurt. Through the eddying battle-smoke Eleazer saw him rallying and reforming his retreating men.

Then a single rifle-shot cracked from the right of the American line. Toppling from the saddle, the gallant Willington fell mortally wounded into the arms of two of his devoted soldiers, who bore him hastily to the rear.

As steadily as if parading in Hyde Park, the rear and center battalions of the Buffs wheeled into line on the right and left of the road, advanced, halted, dressed up, and fired a perfectly timed and absolutely unaimed volley that stripped the leaves from the trees and wounded seven or eight militiamen.

In the comparative hush that followed, the trampling of hoofs and the jingle of chain-bits and scabbards was plainly heard to come from the high ground on the American right. Over the crest of the ridge and riding down in the rear of the wall came a column of red-coated dragoons.

"British cavalry!" screamed the shrill, hysterical voice of some frightened fool. "Run for your lives, boys!"



INSTANTLY every other militiaman there was stricken with the same senseless panic. The long, parti-colored line behind the stone walls crumbled and broke into a shapeless, helpless crowd running away as fast as they could set foot to the road.

The bravest, most reckless fighters on earth could have done nothing half so dangerous as to turn their backs on such a danger. The broken, fleeing militiamen could have been ridden down and sabered like sheep. Yet the supposedly hostile cavalry reined in and made no effort to pursue.

"It's our own men!" shouted General Mooers, spurring into the crazy mob and laying about him with the flat of his sword. "It's the Essex Dragoons! For shame's sake, boys, hold up and face the other way!"

But the men who had stood up so steadily to British regulars only a minute before were now past all shame and reason. Like stampeding cattle the half-trained and utterly unreliable militia surged blindly to the rear.

For a minute the astonished Buffs stood staring after their surprizing foes. Then with a roar of laughter the redcoats rushed forward to capture the two American six-pounders.

But the cannoneers, though young recruits in their first action, were regulars, capably commanded by Captain Leonard of the 3rd Artilley. Unflinchingly they rammed home half-charges of powder and double-charges of grape; pricked, primed and fired their pieces into the very faces of their charging foes.

Out of the grove and up to the front galloped the gun-teams. The off-wheels of the limbers bumped over the trails as they swung smartly about. Desperately the artillerymen lifted and tugged at the clumsy, ponderous guns, heavier and harder to handle than modern pieces of thrice their caliber.

"Remember Willington!" shouted the Buffs, bounding over the mangled bodies of their comrades and closing grimly in with the bayonet.

"Lundy's Lane! Lundy's Lane!" rang the answering battle-cry of the 13th United States Infantry, leaping forward to save the guns.

Redcoats and bluecoats met face to face. Veteran regulars both, bred of the one stanch strain, thinking the same thoughts and swearing the same short oaths as they parried and thrust, neither could gain and neither would give ground. Fiercely they fought till the Leonard's battery, limbered up at last, lurched out of the tangled fight and sped away to the rear.

Then, keeping an unbroken front, the American battalion fell slowly and steadily back. They had one great advantage over their opponents, for they were in light marching order, having brought only their canteens and cartridge-boxes and left their packs in Plattsburg. The Buffs, loaded and strapped like pack-mules, were in many cases so badly winded after charging a hundred yards and fighting for five minutes that they could not stir a foot in pursuit but stood panting and leaning on their muskets.

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Now would have been an auspicious time for a charge by the Essex Dragoons. But their captain knew that at least half of his amateur troopers would fall out of their saddles if they tried to gallop and that none of them had ever had the slightest sword-practise. Aghast at the mischief wrought by their scarlet uniforms, he took his men off the field.

Disengaging two of his four companies, Major Wool sent them to the rear, loading and priming their flintlocks as they ran. Halted and faced to the front, these covered the retreat of their comrades, now hard pressed by their swarming foes.

Rising in his stirrups, the young major shouted an order. His men broke and threw themselves into the ditches on either side of the road, unmasking the halted six-pounders. Two cannon-balls plowed long, ghastly lanes through the close-packed British column.

The two light companies of the Buffs threw off their knapsacks and deployed as skirmishers, swarming forward on either hand to outflank the tiny rear-guard. The other British regiments continued steadily and irresistibly up the road.

At the sight of the great invading host so easily sweeping the handful of defenders before it Eleazer's heart was heavy with fear for America.

"Can I be of any service, sir?" he offered, riding up to Major Wool.

"You can indeed, sir," replied the field officer, who afterward became a famous general in the Mexican War. "Ride to Plattsburg and ask General Macomb to arrange with Commodore MacDonough to have some of his galleys pull in to the shore and cover our retreat with their bow-guns when we reach the upper end of the bay."

"Anything else, major?"

"Only this," said Wool as a volley from his flanking companies drove back the skirmishers and the little command marched steadily on. "Tell General Macomb that the 13th are bringing in their wounded, their colors, and the guns."

CHAPTER XII

THE NIGHT ATTACK

MAJOR WOOL'S battalion made good their commander's boast. Slowly, doggedly they fell back, mile after mile and hour after hour, till they reached the cross-roads just in time to escape being cut off by the British left column coming up the lake road. Hard pressed by the conjoined masses of redcoats, the handful of American regulars came at last to the head of Plattsburg Bay.

There they found four of MacDonough's largest galleys, the U. S. S. *Borer*, *Centipede*, *Nettle* and *Viper*, anchored close inshore. These promptly opened a welcome fire from their heavy bow guns, sweeping the beach and the road behind it with grape and round-shot. Enfiladed and unable to reply, the British infantry were forced to make a detour inland, while Wool marched straight on to Plattsburg village and the lower bridge across the Saranac.

Leonard's battery galloped wearily across the bridge, unlimbered and went into action as the infantrymen tore up the planks, cut away the beams and rebuilt them into a barricade, under a heavy fire from the redcoats now thronging the village.

Mooers' militia had long since crossed and ripped up the upper bridge. Macomb's little army was driven in and stood at bay on its wedge of fortified ground. Every minute the Americans expected to see the heads of assaulting columns come splashing across the fords.

But though brigade after brigade marched up and halted in and about Plattsburg till the whole left bank of the Saranac glowed with scarlet and flashed with steel, the British infantry were not allowed to attack.

Then their guns came on the ground. The gallant R. F. A. flatly refused to swerve inland from the fire of the galleys. The British field batteries unlimbered among the sand-dunes and opened on the rocking, pitching gunboats, now tossed about and in danger of being driven ashore by the freshening wind.

Observing their predicament, Commodore MacDonough sent them an order to withdraw, by Midshipman Silas Duncan. His boat was hit again and again and he himself badly wounded. But the boy delivered his message and the galleys backed their oars and pulled out into the bay.

Now from every new-built fort and redoubt the American artillery poured a sudden deluge of bomb-shells and red-hot shot on the shingled roofs of Plattsburg. Long since deserted by its inhabitants, some of whom were among the very gunners now

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bombarding their own homes, the village was soon ablaze.

The British army was withdrawn from the burning town to the high ridge out of cannon-shot to the westward and there went into camp. Only a thin screen of outposts was left by the Saranac to observe the American positions and guard the working-parties that began to throw up siege-batteries.

They continued to work and watch for four comparatively eventless days, enlivened only by sporadic bombardments and skirmishes at the fords. Then Captain McGlassin, described by the local historian as a "little, beardless Scotchman," rose from a sick-bed to make a proposition to General Macomb and swaggered out of headquarters a well and happy man.

At eleven o'clock on the starless night of Saturday, September 10th, McGlassin paraded his company of the 15th Infantry under the walls of Fort Brown and called for volunteers. Every one of the fifty men present stepped forward in response.

"Fix bayonets," commanded the little captain. "Open r-ranks. Draw r-ramrods. Inser-rt r-ramrods. Inspection ar-rms."

Moving rapidly up and down the line, McGlassin plumbed the depths of each and every musket-barrel and found it as empty as the cartridge-box on its bearer's hip. But he was a man who left little to chance on the eve of action.

"R-return r-ramrods! Tak oot your gun-flints. Inspection ar-rms."

And he inspected them all over again, confiscating the flints.

"Carry ar-rms. Close ranks. Stand at ease. And if ony mon o' this command fires a shot this nicht, I'll run him through with my ain hand for disobeying orders, likewise for wor-rkin' black magic.

"Noo where the de'il's that guide?"

"Here," grunted Tallow Jack at the captain's elbow.

McGlassin never started.

"D'ye ken where y'are tae guide us?" he demanded.

"Place where redcoats fixem sky-snake-guns, back of Wright's."

THE captain nodded and was about to commence the march when a flutter of white caught his eye. Standing beside Tallow Jack was a girl; not a squaw, but a fashionably dressed young lady, wearing a huge bonnet and a long dark shawl that almost completely covered her high-waisted muslin dress.

Rushing up to McGlassin, she whispered excitedly—

"Oh, sir, I must go with you tonight!"

"Ye maun bide at hame, lass. Where we're gaein' is na place for ony young leddy."

"But I am not afraid. And see, I am very strong."

"Losh!" gasped McGlassin as he felt his wrists suddenly crushed by what felt like a pair of steel handcuffs a size too small.

He looked keenly into the face under the bonnet now close to and almost on a level with his shako.

"Ye ha' the voice of a lass," he declared slowly. "And the figure and the face and the bearing and the bonny lang curls of a lass. But ye ha' the thews of an unco' strong man. Who are ye?"

"Eleazer Williams, at your service," said the other, releasing him.

Slapping his thigh, McGlassin curled up in a fit of silent laughter.

"There'll be a scandal i' the kirk!" he quavered. "Will ye preach like this the morn?"

"No; but I must cross the river with you tonight. Step over here and I will explain. Do you know the Darling family?"

"Yon nest o' turncoat Tories on Cumberland Head? Were I General Macomb I'd ha' cleared them oot ere now."

"They are as loyal Americans as you or I, although most people think differently, and the Canadian Secret Service considers Miss Lucy Darling one of its most valuable agents. As a matter of fact she is one of mine.

"This afternoon she received a visit from a certain major in the Vermont militia whom I have had my eye on for a long time. I was there with two of my men to arrest him as soon as he had incriminated himself. We bungled the affair and gave him a chance to draw and fire a pistol, missing me but unintentionally shooting Miss Darling through the left shoulder."

"Tck! Tck! Tck!" clucked McGlassin sympathetically. "Will the lass recover?"

"Yes, thank Heaven. And so will the renegade, whom all three of us seem to have struck with great violence at the same time. General Macomb vows that he shall be court-martialed and hanged as soon as he is out of the doctor's hands.

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"The trouble is that he left a cipher dispatch for Miss Darling to deliver at the British outpost on the Head road at midnight tonight, together with the necessary pass-words. Obviously such an opportunity for placing false information in the enemy's hands must not be neglected.

"Miss Darling, who is slightly taller than I am and magnificently proportioned, at once suggested my wearing her things. She even insisted on her mother's cutting off these long golden ringlets and affixing them to the calash."

Eleazer's voice shook as he told of this supreme sacrifice.

"And tae think I misca'ed her a Tory," sighed the penitent McGlassin. "Mon, if ye ha' na proposed a'ready——"

"Miss Darling is already engaged," said Eleazer sadly. "To an estimable young druggist in Troy—an ensign in the Trojan Greens."

"Will ye be balked by a green-coated, white-livered, pill-rollin' feckless gowp o' a militiaman?" demanded McGlassin with a fervor that made B Company prick up its ears with interest. Mentally he added—

"If you will, I winna."

"We must cross the river at once," urged Eleazer, picking up his skirts. "Or I shall be too late."

"Company attention! Recht by files, mar-rch! Carry ar-rms and step saft."

Guided by Tallow Jack, the fifty infantrymen crept slowly in single file down the high bank to the edge of the stream.

"Why hae ye come sae far oot o' your way?" whispered the captain to Eleazer.

"I had to visit headquarters to make certain arrangements with General Macomb. By then it was too late for me to return to Cumberland Head by boat in time to keep Miss Darling's appointment. By crossing the river with you I can take a short-cut through the ruins back of the British outpost lines. But I must cross dry-shod and dry-skirted or they may suspect."

"Here's the lad for ye, then."

The two had halted on the shore while the men filed past and waded into the stream. Shepherding the rear, loomed a huge silent elephant of a man.

"Orderly sergeant, gie's your firelock," whispered McGlassin. "Pick this leddy up and carry her across tae the ither side."

Two vast arms swooped down and picked Eleazer up as easily as he could have lifted a little child. He understood at once why B Company was celebrated for its good discipline, and felt a pang of sympathy for any redcoat who might cross the orderly sergeant's line of advance that night.

He heard the water rippling past and rising higher and higher as they waded diagonally across the Saranac by a ford well known to Tallow Jack but unsuspected by the British, whose pickets were growing lax and careless. Eleazer could hear them trampling about and talking loudly to one another on top of the high bank above and to the right of where the orderly sergeant waded out and set him tenderly down.

Following the coat-tails of the man ahead, they came to a steep, narrow path sloping diagonally up the face of the bluff and so to a cow-pasture knee-deep in grass and goldenrod. Then they passed through a grove of dwarf oaks, at the far edge of which they found the company halted in line.

"Bide here wi' the twenty-five men on the left," whispered Captain McGlassin to the orderly sergeant, who was acting second in command, both lieutenants being in hospital, "while I fetch a circuit round wi' the rest tae the rear o' the enemy's poseetion. D'ye hear them delving?"

"Yes, sir," rumbled the giant.

Plainly through the minor noises of the night came the clatter of hammers, the thud of picks and the grate of shovels from the top of the little hill above them, where a British working-party were toiling by lantern-light at the construction of a new battery.

"Bide here and keep quiet till you hear me cry the onfall," continued McGlassin. "Then char-rge hame and let ilka mon mak' a' the noise he can. This way, if you please, ma'am."

With much ceremony he led Eleazer away from the sorely puzzled orderly sergeant. Guided by Tallow Jack the spy, the captain and twenty-five infantrymen crept softly around the foot of the hill. In a few minutes they came to a small, unlighted frame building.

"Wright's printing-office," murmured Eleazer. "I turn off here. May the Lord be with you in the fight."

"Amen," answered McGlassin, "and may He no' be forgetful o' yoursel'. Walk warily and bring me back ane o' Lucy Darling's curls."

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DOWN the narrow path from the secluded printing-plant Eleazer ran as fast as his hampering clothes permitted. It was almost pitch dark, but he knew every foot of the way—until he reached the burned-over portion of the village. Then and there, in the heart of his own home town, the famous scout and ranger suddenly lost himself completely!

Streets and houses were merged in one shapeless wilderness of charred timbers and broken bricks. There was not a single gable or chimney left for a landmark nor a star in the overclouded sky.

If he continued at random he might at any moment walk into a British picket. But his greatest danger was from the smut and ashes that might even now be marking him with telltale streaks and smudges that he would never have received on the Cumberland Head road.

Listening for the murmur of the river, he suddenly heard McGlassin's distant shout—

"Char-rge, men; char-rge, upon the front and rear!"

"Yeh-eh-eh!" rose B Company's long, high-pitched yell.

Oh, but it was galling to be skulking there in woman's clothes and hear that gallant shout—the answering sputter of musketry—the clash of steel as the charge struck home—the cries of alarm from the picket-line and the roll of drums from the British camp on the ridge.

Another Yankee cheer; the battery was captured—the working-party and guards had made a short fight and a quick retreat. A great banging and clanging resounded through the night. Then a light began to burn on the captured hill. Flames rose and spread. McGlassin had evidently piled up the timbering and set it afire.

FLASH! A great burst of crimson flame spouted up as if from a volcano, burning away the night and lighting the whole wide-spread scene with an unearthly glare. Eleazer had one blinding glimpse of the ruined court-house silhouetted against the blaze and knew exactly where he was when darkness fell again and the deep roar of the exploding magazine went thundering past.

WHOOSH! Up shot long shimmering trails of golden sparks, gracefully curving, suddenly ending in bursts of flame high overhead. Crash on crash resounded through the air, waking every echo of Saranac's banks and Cumberland Head in reverberating answer. Appreciative cheers went up from the American camp, while in the lulls the shrill notes of the bosuns' whistles could be heard from the startled fleet.

"This," chuckled Eleazer to himself as he ran through the open spaces of the burned district with his skirts kilted up to his knees, "beats the best Fourth of July celebration that Boston or New York ever saw. I only hope the second part of the fireworks will be equal to Jack's 'sky-snakes'."

Peering through a clump of trees, he made out the picket on the Head road, all faced about and staring at the conflagration now beginning to die down on the hilltop. Keeping under cover, moving only when it was dark and standing rigidly still during each burst of light, Eleazer circled round them till he reached the road at a point between the picket and the Darlings' house.

Three minutes later the sentry heard a light footstep behind him and whirled about and challenged ferociously, to show that he had been watching all the time.

"A friend to the king," came the sweet, low answer.

"Advance, friend to the king, and give the countersign."

"Restoration."

"Pass, friend, and all's well."

"Good evening, Miss Darling," said a tall, slight officer in the uniform of the Frontier Light Infantry, striding forward and holding out his hand. "I am Captain Hope."

In a lower tone he added—

"A-1."

"L-34," answered Eleazer, in a voice that trembled without any conscious effort on his part as he pressed the little tissue-paper square of forgeries into the outstretched palm of his arch-adversary, the great A-1—the Chief of the Canadian Secret Service.

Never before had Hope crossed over to American soil. His work had been done, not in the field but in his busy office at Montreal, where came thousands of reports from hundreds of agents, there to be decoded, compared and estimated at their true value; something for which he had an uncanny and almost unerring instinct.

Time and again during the past two years he had nullified all Eleazer's efforts by craftily sowing distrust of Williams in the jealous minds of American political generals; time and again he had brought their

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blundering invasions of Canada to ignominious defeat.

Eleazer feared and respected Hope as he did no other foe. But he felt morally certain that the Canadian chief had never met Lucy Darling, and he threw himself into the part with all his skill.

"Oh, sir," he quavered. "What fearful thing has happened? Was it a battle?"

"Congreve rocket-battery raided and blown up," answered Captain Hope crisply. "You've seen the ordinary little cardboard sky-rockets of course, Miss Darling? Well, these are great sheet-iron brutes with three and six pounder bursting-charges—nasty things to have come flying in your face, as Napoleon's fellows found at Leipzig.

"A Yankee battalion crossed the Saranac just now, smashed up the rocket-tubes, touched off the whole lot and nipped back again before we could cut them off. Jolly smart bit of work."

"A battalion?" said the lovely creature beside him very innocently.

"Four companies of infantry—three to four hundred men," explained the captain kindly. "Saw them myself a few minutes ago as they recrossed the river."

Eleazer's fear melted away in a warm glow of happiness. Even the great A-1 was human and could see quadruple at times like other folk. Like many another celebrated administrator and office-worker, Hope was not at his best in the field.

"I must return now—it is very late," urged the supposed Miss Darling.

"I'm afraid I must take you with me to headquarters," answered Hope.

Eleazer looked shocked—and felt the same way. Did Hope suspect? Should Eleazer try to knock him out and make a bolt for it? He hesitated mainly because there was no cover for fifty yards and the picket was not composed of regulars but of Frontier Light Infantrymen—all noted sharp-shooters.

"You see," the captain continued, "Sir George wanted to occupy Cumberland Head and put a battery there to drive the Yankee fleet from its present anchorage. I had to explain to him how necessary it was that your house should be left outside the lines and what good work you had been doing and all that. Sir George was so impressed that he ordered me to bring you up to headquarters tonight, so that he can thank you in person."

"But that would be most improper," protested Eleazer demurely. "And besides, every one would know——"

"Exactly. Absolutely wrong from our point of view, but I couldn't make the governor-general see it. He's been reading this new romantic poetry of Walter Scott's and it's gone to his head—spouts whole cantos without the slightest warning. Regards you as a medievalish sort of heroine and wants to pay you a bit of knightly homage."

"And he is a married man!" murmured the scandalized maiden.

"I should jolly well say he was," affirmed Hope. "My word, Congreve rockets wouldn't be in it with Lady Prevost if the poor old duffer ever really misbehaved himself and she found him out. He merely wants to see a real live lady spy and pay her a few clumsy middle-aged compliments. I give you my word of honor that's absolutely all."

"I can trust *your* word, I know," breathed Eleazer in a tone that thrilled Hope like 1801 champagne. "But I must hurry straight home immediately afterwards or poor mama will be much distressed."

"I have a one-horse shay handy—fellow's bringing it now. Here we are—drive you to headquarters and back like winking."

Away they rattled into Plattsburg and straight through the ruins by a newly opened military road that soon brought them to the Allen farmhouse on the ridge, where Sir George Prevost had established his headquarters. As they drove up a rocketeer officer and an infantry major were coming down the front steps, arguing wearily.

"But, my dear chap, do be reasonable," implored the major, who had his right arm in a sling. "I had only a hundred and fifty men under arms, and there was at least one entire Yankee regiment."

"B Company is still growing," soliloquized Eleazer. "By sunrise it will be an army corps."

"Sir George will see you and the lady at once, Captain Hope," said the spruce young aide-de-camp who met them at the house door. "Er—don't be alarmed if you find him a bit jerky and abrupt."

"Nerves again, eh?" said Hope in a low voice.

"Jumped clear out of his hessians when the squibs went off," whispered the staff

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officer as he knocked at the door of what had been Mrs. Allen's front parlor.

"Come in! Come in!" snapped an irritated voice.

The aide-de-camp threw open the door and Eleazer entered on Captain Hope's arm.

Seated behind the prim little center table once sacred to the Allens' family Bible but now cluttered with papers and crowded with candle-sticks was a worried-looking, stoutish man wearing sparse gray side-whiskers and an extraordinary mixture of military and civilian clothes. He glared and blinked like an agitated owl as Captain Hope saluted and Eleazer dropped his best courtesy.

The man behind the table rose, bowed and cleared his throat as if about to deliver a neat little speech which he had already composed and committed to memory. But all he could say at first was—

"Er-er-er."

Then he rapped out abruptly:

"Did you bring the news from Vermont? Captain Hope, did she bring the news from Vermont?"

"Here it is, sir."

"Ah! Er—Miss Darling, you will pardon us for just a moment?"

Eleazer dropped another courtesy. Something ripped ominously as he did so, but the firmly pinned and basted-on shawl hid whatever it was that had given way.

"Won't you sit down?" murmured a pleasant voice.

"Thank you," said Eleazer sweetly, sinking into the chair and smiling up into the face of the gentleman who had provided it. It was Major Brandsby, the staff officer he had met the morning of his escape from Champlain.

NO GIRL ever dropped her eyes to the carpet more quickly than Eleazer did. No man could hope to maintain such a masquerade in modern knee-length skirts, while some one who knew him was bending over the back of the chair. But swathed and shawled as he was from instep to throat, and with his face hidden in the cavernous depths of a huge bonnet hung with real curls, Eleazer was hard to recognize.

Moreover, the room was in deep shadow except for the patch of candle-light in the center, where Sir George was fumbling the little strip of flimsy paper.

Behind and on either side of the governor-general was a solid mass of scarlet uniforms, broken in one place by a solitary figure in white. Eleazer's eyes, when at length he dared to raise them again, were attracted that way and met the interested gaze of the Marquis de Fenouil!

"Are you cold?" asked Brandsby solicitously as he saw the girl tremble and draw her shawl more closely about her.

A petulant exclamation from Sir George excused Eleazer from replying.

"Confound it—it's in the new cipher! Now where's that other code-book?"

"I'll read it aloud, sir," said Captain Hope, taking the dispatch and decoding it unaided as he read:

"Vermont militia secretly mobilized. Twenty-five hundred picked men about to cross lake to Plattsburg. Governor Chittenden in person leading ten thousand State troops towards St. Albans. Five thousand from St. Lawrence County and four thousand from Washington County also under arms and marching to foot of lake with evident intention of attacking our rear and line of communications. Peace Party stunned by governor's defection and tremendous outburst popular patriotism. Situation most serious.—J-5."

"This—this confirms those other letters—the ones that were captured with Eleazer Williams!" cried Prevost excitedly. "This proves that they are authentic."

"Or that they and this are all false, sir," answered Captain Hope.

"False? Do you mean that this is forged?"

"Possibly. By candle-light it seems absolutely correct, and part of its contents I know to be true. But the rest—somehow it doesn't fit in. Or rather it fits in altogether too well.

"Eleazer Williams isn't the man to be captured so easily, and he's just the sort to stuff his desk-drawers with false dispatches and fill Burlington with all kinds of rumors for J-5's benefit. I wouldn't put too much faith in these stories till we've had a chance to sift them a bit further, sir."

Eleazer's opinion of Captain Hope rose higher than ever. Here was a worthy opponent, even when handicapped by a Sir George Prevost, as he himself had been handicapped by a Wilkinson and a Wade Hampton in the past. And just as Hope's intrigues had craftily befogged and frightened those two incompetents, so Eleazer's "strong medicine" was throwing its spell over Prevost.

Boastful, excitable, nervous and over-imaginative, Sir George Prevost was a

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strange commander for a British army. He was utterly un-English and silly enough to let that worry him, He kept trying to hide the fact that he had been born in New York City before the Revolution, the son of a respectable Dutch *vrouw* and a hard-working little watchmaker from Geneva. He had inherited all the shrewdness and none of the sturdy courage and self-respecting democracy of his republican forbears on both sides.

A consummate politician, he had made himself an English baronet, Governor-General of Canada and commander of the most powerful invading army that ever marched up the shore of Lake Champlain. But every mile he advanced into his native State strengthened his youthful memories of how the news had come down the Hudson of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga. Defeated but still intact, the British force had been on the point of withdrawal when suddenly the Green Mountain Boys swooped across Lake Champlain, raided Burgoyne's supply-depots, smashed his whole long line of communications and sewed him up in a sack.

Were they now planning to play the same trick on Burgoyne's successor? Were Izard's withdrawal, Chittenden's peace talk and all the other apparent blunders and weaknesses of the Americans simply parts of a cunning scheme to draw him southward to his undoing? Prevost had the sort of mind that deduces deep-laid conspiracies from surface indications far slighter than those which Eleazer had thoughtfully provided.

So obviously was Prevost shaken and tormented by indecision that Eleazer found himself actually pitying this futile invader who held the Empire State in the palm of his hand and dared not grasp it.

AS HE studied Sir George's face, it seemed as if it flushed. The whole room began to grow brighter. A flickering, ruddy glow shone in through the windows and made a weird ghost-dance of cery shadows on the ceiling.

"Fire has broken out in the Yankee camp, sir," reported an officer from one of the windows.

There was a general movement in his direction. All gallantly made way for Eleazer as he rose and ran prettily to the nearest window, where he found himself standing and staring out into the night beside Sir George.

"What buildings are those on fire?" demanded Prevost.

"Frame barracks erected for Izard's army, sir," answered Captain Hope promptly. "Macomb hasn't men enough to fill them, and they mask the fire of some of his new batteries."

"Look! Look!" cried the agitated Sir George.

The increasing glare from the burning barracks now lit the greater part of the parade-ground between Fort Brown and Fort Moreau, revealing endless columns of gray and blue coated infantry marching in from the south.

"The dear old Drury Lane stage army, sir," said Captain Hope, chuckling. "Macomb is simply parading his fellows past in the firelight and double-timing them back behind the scenes to the rear again to make them look like reinforcements."

"But those troops in gray! They're new —they're Vermonters!"

"I was about to say, sir, that twenty-five hundred of them crossed over today in sloops, a few miles up the lake."

"Then J-5 was right. And if that part was true, why not the rest? Ten, four, five—good Heavens, gentlemen, we may have nineteen thousand Green Mountain Boys on our flank and rear."

"Vermont could hardly put anything like that number in the field, sir," demurred Captain Hope.

"And no earthly danger if it did—rascally rabble—run like rabbits!" growled the deep, contemptuous voice of Major-General Brisbane. "Give me permission to take my brigade across the Saranac, Sir George, and I'll promise to capture those intrenchments with the bayonet in twenty minutes."

"There will be no deviation from my orders as already given," snapped Prevost irritably. "Commodore Downie's squadron should appear off Cumberland Head at dawn this morning, enter the bay and engage the American fleet. At the same time our land batteries will open on the forts and bridgeheads. General Robinson's brigade will ford the Saranac at Pike's Cantonment, drive off the New York militia and prevent the escape of Macomb's garrison by occupying the base of the peninsula.

"If practicable, General Robinson will then attack the forts from the south, while

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storming columns will be pushed over by the bridges and lower fords. But once the Yankee ships have been sunk or captured, then General Macomb must soon surrender, without our wasting our strength in unnecessary and costly assaults on his position."

Absorbed in listening to these revelations, Eleazer had forgotten everything else. Sir George had turned to the window again when Eleazer felt a sharp tug at his bonnet-strings. Looking down, he saw a familiar white-laced cuff and a slender hand pulling at one of the long cherry-colored ribbons daintily knotted under his chin.

A hearty slap and a roar of laughter behind him made Sir George spin round abruptly. He saw the Marquis de Fenouil nursing the back of his hand, to the uproarious joy of all the British officers present.

"Here, here, what's all this?" demanded Prevost.

Silence fell so rapidly that a sporting aide-de-camp in the background was distinctly heard to offer nine to five on the lady.

"Oh, Sir George," sobbed Eleazer piteously, "he—he laid his hand on my b-bosom and tried—he t-tried——"

At this point the affronted damsel broke down and could say no more. But Sir George Prevost had heard enough. A middle-aged sentimentalist (outside politics) and saturated in Walter Scott, he spurred gallantly to the rescue.

"Calm your fears, Miss Darling, calm your fears. Here in the savage forest and the rugged camp of Britain's war, you are far safer than in the gilded halls of licentious Versailles."

"Nasty one for the marquis, that," whispered Major Brandsby to Captain Hope, who said nothing but was looking from the plaintively sobbing Eleazer to the now expressionless and stiffly bowing de Fenouil.

"I beg *mademoiselle's* pardon," purred the marquis. "If *mademoiselle* will have the goodness to remove her——"

"Oh!" cried Eleazer at this supreme insult. "Must I—must I stand here and submit to this? Is chivalry dead? Sir George, is *this* your gratitude?"

"Not another word, mounseer!" thundered the governor-general magnificently. "Your ambassadorial office renders your person sacred, else would I avenge with my own hand your outrageous conduct towards one who has dared perils unspeakable for England's sake."

De Fenouil's smile of amused contempt cut deeper than any words. But there was hesitation in his eyes. He had never been quite certain that this was Eleazer, for the light was bad and de Fenouil's sight was not so keen as it had once been. His ingenious attempt to unmask or rather to unbonnet the impostor had failed because he mistook for a simple bow-knot the very secure fastening with which Eleazer, taught by his loss of the white wig on that gallop through the woods, had anchored his head-gear.

Nothing would have pleased the marquis more than to send his friend Colonel Meuron to Sir George Prevost and then send an accurate sword-point or pistol-bullet through the baronet's plump body. But without the governor-general's cooperation he could never recapture and deport Eleazer Williams.

If de Fenouil persisted now and the utterly feminine-looking creature before him proved to be the real Miss Darling, then she would never forgive him. Egged on by her, the mortally offended Prevost would be just the sort to ruin everything and then shirk a duel.

Checkmated, the marquis gave the slightest possible shrug of his shoulders and bowed in silence. Eleazer courtesied primly in acknowledgment.

"Sir George," he murmured rapturously, "you are a true knight. Wear this gage in battle tomorrow for my sake. And now I really must go. Poor dear mama will be *so* distressed."

"Captain Hope will drive you home. Let me see you to the carriage, Miss Darling."

Standing on the door-step of the Allen farmhouse, the Governor-General of Canada sighed sentimentally and kissed a dainty, crumpled but absolutely dry handkerchief.

DOWN from the ridge and through the ruins of Plattsburg rolled the one-horse shay, till it came to the outpost on the Head road. There, as soon as he had been challenged and recognized, Captain Hope commanded sharply:

"Blair and McMillan, climb up behind."

"But why are you bringing the soldiers?" asked Eleazer as they left the British lines and crunched slowly through the sand of the long, curving peninsula terminating in Cumberland Head.

"Bushwhackers about—all the riffraff from both sides of the border prowling

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between the lines," answered Hope. "Also the Yankee Secret Corps—you never can tell where you may run across one of *them*."

"Oh, but I feel perfectly safe with you, Captain Hope," said Eleazer sweetly, though there was a faint ironic undertone in the other's voice that made him feel quite otherwise.

Hope suspected, and was letting him see it. Then why had he concealed his suspicions and failed to act while they were still in the British camp? Obviously because the astute Canadian saw that "Miss Darling" had Sir George Prevost neatly twisted about her little finger. Proof would be needed, either to restore A-1's faith in his operative or to convince the infatuated governor-general of the contrary. And the place to find the proof would be the Darling home.

Nothing more was said till they came within sight of a lighted window—the window of the upper room where the real Lucy Darling lay propped up in bed with a bullet-wound in her shoulder.

"I think I had better get down here and walk the rest of the way by myself," suggested Eleazer.

"Oh, no; I insist on seeing you to the door. Otherwise Sir George would never forgive me."

"But you are in uniform. If you are seen, people will suspect."

"Let them," said Hope. "Within something less than twenty-four hours Plattsburg and all this region will be British territory. Your secret-service work is about to come to an end."

With these ominously ambiguous words Captain Hope pulled up before the Darlings' garden gate, jumped down and helped his companion to the ground.

"Cock your rifles, men, follow me and look sharp," he ordered the two riflemen as he opened the gate for Eleazer to pass through.

Arm in arm they walked up the path, mounted the front steps and stood before the door while Hope beat a thundering rat-tat-tat on the brass knocker.

Then as the knob was turned from within he sidestepped into the dark. The door opened. Mrs. Darling, fully dressed—for she had been night-nursing the wounded Lucy—appeared on the threshold with a glass-shaded candle in her hand.

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed. "You have safely returned, Mr. Williams."

"Not quite!" cried the exultant Hope, leaping out of the dark and throwing his long arms about Eleazer.

The two Frontier Light Infantrymen stared open-mouthed as they saw the pretty girl neatly cross-buttock the captain, hoist his struggling body on her back and pitch him head foremost down the steps. Then Mrs. Darling slammed the door, shutting off the light and giving Eleazer a very fair chance of escaping in the dark.

But as he hurdled the prostrate Hope, a strong hand seized the hem of his skirt and hung grimly on. The stout muslin ripped in places but elsewhere held.

"Get him, you idiots!" shouted Hope.

Grasping the situation, the two soldiers threw themselves on Eleazer. Private Blair ran his midriff into something that felt like the end of a beam and sat down with a pained and astonished gasp.

But Private McMillan upheld the honor of his clan. Laying aside his cocked rifle as an ill thing to have about you in a wrestling match, the brawny Scot "fair grippit the wee warlock" and held him till Hope pulled Eleazer's feet out from under him and brought them all to the ground. It took the three of them to bind his wrists and ankles with strips torn from the wreckage of the gown.

"Never mind the gag," panted Eleazer. "Give you my word I won't cry out."

The three rose and stood over him, breathing heavily.

"What made you suspect, Captain Hope?"

"De Fenouil's conduct. Couldn't account for it otherwise."

"You knew he wanted me, then?"

"Knew he'd let you slip through his fingers last week-end."

"Did he take you into his confidence?"

"Not he."

"That," declared Eleazer, "is where he made his mistake."

"We all make them," said Hope. "But if I may say so, I've never known a man to make fewer than you, Mr. Williams."

"Thank you. I appreciate that, Captain Hope, sir," said Eleazer, who had turned over and was lying with one ear pressed to the ground. "It has been a pleasure to do business with a gentleman and a genius like yourself. You've only made one little mistake tonight ——"

"Quick, lads! Pick him up and into the shay with him!"

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"You should have sent a man to the back door," he continued calmly as they bore him down the path. "By now Mrs. Darling has had plenty of time to run down to the landing-place and fetch——"

Footsteps pounded heavily on the turf. Dark-clothed figures brandishing long, broad blades that glimmered faintly in the night hurtled around each end of the house. Captain Hope snatched out his pistol and pulled trigger, but the priming flashed in the pan. Before they could drop their prisoner and either fight or run for it, the three Canadians were surrounded by a dozen Yankee bluejackets with drawn cutlases.

"The boat's crew from the *Saratoga*," finished Eleazer. "Waiting to take me back across the bay to the forts. But I guess we'll go straight out to the flagship instead and see Commodore MacDonough. He'll be very glad to meet you, Captain Hope, and to learn all about what's to happen at sunrise."

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

"SAIL ho!"

Across the narrow strip of low-lying land that ended in Cumberland Head the officers and crews of MacDonough's fleet could see the snowy upper canvas of the British squadron coming up the lake with a fair wind astern. Two large sloops led the way, their great mainsails boomed out to starboard; then came a brig and finally a tall full-rigged ship, all flying the white ensign.

"The *Chubb* and *Finch* sloops," said First-Lieutenant Peter Gamble of the *Saratoga* to the little man in civilian clothes standing beside him on the flagship's quarter deck.

"Late U. S. S. *Growler* and *Eagle*, captured from us last year when Lieutenant Sydney Smith chased three British gunboats too far down into the Richelieu and ran his head into a trap. That brig is the *Linnet* and the big fellow must be the frigate *Confiance*."

Eleazer Williams nodded politely, though he knew all these things already. Convinced that the main, decisive action would be fought afloat and that the land fighting would be purely secondary, he had sent a written report to General Macomb by the boat that landed the three prisoners, and had asked the commodore's permission to remain and serve as a volunteer aboard the *Saratoga*.

"Have you any knowledge of gunnery?" asked MacDonough.

"I have been commanding one of the batteries ashore, sir," replied Eleazer. "I have had some experience with field-pieces and long ship's guns but none with carronades."

"I'll put you in charge of Number Thirteen—the aftermost of the two long twenty-fours on the starboard side of the poop. Too many of our crew are raw hands who have never smelled salt water, and trained gunners are sorely needed. My clerk, Mr. Sloane, is about your size; he'll lend you a more suitable rig-out than those rags and ribbons you've served in so gallantly. Better turn in now and snatch a few hours' sleep while you can."

Daybreak had found all hands breakfasted and at their battle-stations. The seamen-gunners were standing by their primed and loaded pieces, the powder-monkeys were clustered about the water-soaked felt screen that hung before the door of the magazine, and the detachment of blue-coated infantrymen who were serving as marines under Captain Young of the regular army were drawn up on the poop and fo'csle or posted as sharpshooters in the tops.

There was no danger of these landsmen being incapacitated by seasickness, for the sails were furled and the four large vessels of the squadron riding at anchor in absolutely calm water.

Commodore MacDonough had taken full advantage of the peculiar local conditions. Lake Champlain is long and narrow and runs almost due north and south. The prevailing winds blow directly either up or down the lake. The square-riggers of both fleets were shallow-draft, awkward vessels for working to windward. Therefore he felt sure that the British squadron would advance scudding before a north wind.

But the mouth of Plattsburg Bay opens to the south. Once off Cumberland Head, Commodore Downie would be unlikely to wait there for the wind to shift to the southward. Sudden and violent gales are common at that time of year; in fact at the close of that very day the equinoctial storm was raging furiously. His only alternative would be to attack at once, which meant that his ships would have to round the point and beat up against light and baffling airs, with their bows exposed to a raking fire from

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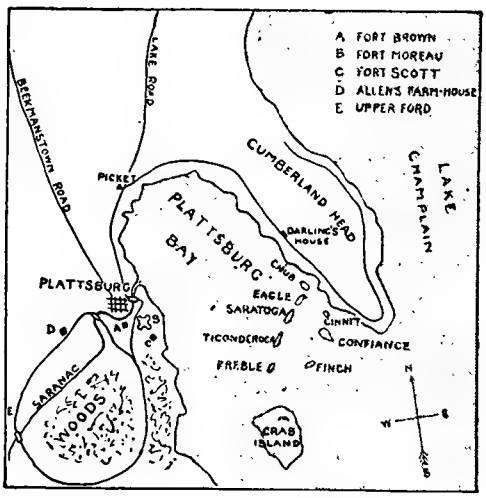
the menacing broadside batteries of their foes.

The American fleet was drawn up in line ahead across the entrance channel, which is about a mile and a half broad. MacDonough's position was hard to turn, for his line ran from shallow water off Cumberland Head to the broad shoal surrounding Crab Island, on which were the naval hospital and a two-gun battery manned by convalescents.

The other American batteries and forts were two miles to the westward and entirely out of range. MacDonough was taking no chances of being driven from his anchorage by having Macomb's guns captured and turned against him.

His line was formed by the twenty-gun brig *Eagle*, the corvette *Saratoga*, twenty-six, the schooner *Ticonderoga*, seventeen, and the little sloop *Preble*, seven, all anchored with their bows toward Cumberland Head and their starboard batteries toward the enemy. Distributed in the intervals between the larger vessels or forming a second line about forty yards to the rear were the ten galleys, under oars and with their heavy bow-guns trained on the harbor mouth.

Rounding the point about half-past seven on the morning of September eleventh,



Commodore Downie's four sailing-craft hove to and waited, motionless and out of range.

"What are they waiting for, I wonder?" asked one of the younger officers on the *Saratoga's* quarter-deck.

"Their gunboat flotilla probably," answered the gray-headed sailing-master, Philip Brum. "Ah, here they come."

Round Cumberland Head swung the English galleys, gay with their white ensigns and the brass and scarlet of the Royal Marines. Their oar-blades flashed in the morning sun as they came on at a fast, steady stroke. Longer and heavier than the American galleys, they outnumbered them by twelve to ten.

But far greater were the odds in favor of the British flagship. For a thirty-nine-gun frigate to engage a twenty-six-gun corvette was like letting a welter-weight enter the lightweight ring. As the towering *Confiance* and her three consorts filled away on the starboard tack and bore up for action, Eleazer trembled for the outcome.

"Gentlemen," said Commodore MacDonough, removing his cocked hat, "let us pray."

ALL the officers uncovered and knelt on the quarter-deck in silent prayer. In that hushed moment Eleazer suddenly realized that it was Sunday morning. He shuddered as he thought how soon the sacred calm of the Sabbath would be shattered by the roar of the guns, when fellow-Christians, brothers in speech and blood would begin to slaughter each other.

"Oh Lord, make this war the last among us," he murmured.

"Amen," concluded MacDonough, rising. "To your stations, gentlemen and fire at will."

He himself took charge of the other twenty-four-pounder on the poop, just forward of the one directed by Eleazer.

Grimly and silently peering through the open gun-ports or over the rail, officers and men waited for the beginning of the fight. They watched the British vessels spread out and separate as they approached.

The sloop *Chubb* beat up to the north and into the wind, with the evident intention of outflanking the head of the American line, while the British brig *Linnet* headed for the bows of the Yankee brig *Eagle*. The *Confiance* was steering for the interval between the *Eagle's* stern and the *Saratoga's* bows; should she succeed in taking up such a position and anchoring there, her heavy port and starboard batteries would sweep them both with a raking fire. The *Finch* ran

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down to leeward with the twelve galleys to engage the *Ticonderoga* and the *Preble*.

Suddenly the opening broadside crashed from the *Eagle's* long eighteens. But the range was still too great and the shot fell short. The *Linnet* answered, her missiles also falling short, except one twelve-pound shot that struck and demolished a hen-coop on the deck of the *Saratoga*.

Out of the wreckage flew an indignant and utterly unterrified little gamecock. Strutting across the deck, he jumped up on a carronade slide, flapped his wings and crowed defiantly—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

A delighted roar of cheers and laughter went up from the entire crew. No better augury could have marked the opening of a fight.

Then Commodore MacDonough pulled the lock-string of the gun he had helped train and aim with his own hands. The solid-shot sped straight and true to the bows of the *Confiance*, struck near the port hawse-hole, crashed through and raked her gun-deck from stem to stern.

"Number Thirteen, fire!" commanded Eleazer.

The long twenty-four-pounder spoke and recoiled inboard on its four-wheeled wooden truck, till checked by the straining preventer-tackles and breech-ropes. Stripped to the waist and stationed on the right of the muzzle, the brawny sponger-and-rammer swabbed out the reeking bore. As he reversed his staff, the loader on the left thrust in a flannel-wrapped powder-charge, which was rammed home for the gun-captain to prick and prime. The shot-and-wad man popped in wadding and ball for the second rammer to drive in on top of the load.

"Train her forward a handspike's length," commanded Eleazer, who had been conning the first shot. "Raise the elevation-screw a half-turn and shift the quoin. Run out!"

The stalwart tackle-men ran the clumsy, ponderous piece of ordnance across the deck like a cardboard toy. Every long gun in the American fleet was firing now, and the British galleys were opening in reply.

The *Confiance* came on in disdainful silence, though her bow-chasers were well within range. Splinters were flying from her fo'csle, two of her stream anchors were shot away, and the frigate was losing headway and falling off, not from any lack of resolution in her commander but because the strong wind blowing outside was reduced to faint and fitful catspaws under the lee of Cumberland Head.

Giving up his attempt to break the American line, Commodore Downie luffed up and brought the *Confiance* round with her port battery trained on the *Saratoga* at twelve-hundred-yard range. Letting go all remaining bow and stern anchors, he ordered his men aloft. Eleazer saw the British seamen swarm up the frigate's shrouds, lay out on the yards, strike and furl the sails under a heavy fire, to which their gunners made no reply till all was shipshape and secure.

Then a tremendous broadside thundered from the *Confiance*. Sixteen twenty-four-pounders, double-shotted, carefully aimed and leveled at pointblank range in still water were discharged together.

The little *Saratoga* trembled and shook from truck to keelson at the fearful impact of this storm of solid-shot. Eleazer felt himself flung to the deck, where he lay half-stunned, his ears filled with the crash of the splintered topsides and the shrieks and curses of mangled men. Looking forward along the deck, his first impression was that every man on board had been struck down by that one smashing salvo.

Then as he rose to his feet he realized that he was unwounded and had merely been knocked down by the shock, like many others who were also leaping up and resuming their duties. But forty officers and seamen—a full sixth of the corvette's crew—had been killed outright or badly wounded.

Two of Eleazer's gunners were dead and three disabled. But the rest quickly rallied and carried on, as did all the other gun-crews. The *Saratoga* kept up a steady, accurate fire, though she had only four long guns in action to the frigate's sixteen. The carronades in the waist were firing now, at extreme range and with extra heavy charges that enabled their shot to reach the enemy, sometimes piercing but more often rebounding harmlessly from her massive topsides.

HOW long this continued Eleazer had no idea. All his mind was concentrated on coaching his overworked, overexcited, and undertrained crew, while serving himself as gun-captain, handspike-man and train-tackleman. He had welded himself and the others into one

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smooth-working machine that presently came to an abrupt stop for lack of powder and shot.

Eleazer ran to the break of the poop and looked about for the missing powder-boy, who continued to be missing for two days, until his little body rose to the surface of the lake in two pieces, severed by a round-shot. His loss was forgotten when Eleazer heard behind him a startling crash overhead and a cry from every one on the quarter-deck:

"He's killed! Commodore MacDonough's killed!"

Whirling about, he saw the commodore prone on the deck beneath a long, jagged-ended section of a heavy spar. A British cannon-ball had struck and severed the spanker-boom, part of which had fallen on and felled MacDonough as he stooped to aim his favorite gun. Eleazer and the others who lifted off the broken boom fully expected to find that it had snapped his spine.

But MacDonough was only stunned. In a few seconds he opened his eyes and rose to his feet before any one could assist him.

"To your gun, Mr. Williams!" he said sharply.

CLANG!

Even as the commodore spoke, Number Thirteen gun was torn from its shattered carriage and hurled breech-foremost inboard and half-way across the poop, its muzzle split and broken where an English solid-shot had struck it squarely on the lip.

"I am afraid, sir, that I have no gun to go to," replied Eleazer coolly.

MacDonough laughed like the boy he was.

"To Number Twelve, lads—we need you here, Mr. Williams, lay aloft by the lee mizzen shrouds till you get above this infernal smoke and let me know how the action is going astern. By the sound they are heavily engaged."

Guessing that the shrouds were the rope-ladder-like arrangements that ran up to the round-tops and that the lee side must be the one away from the enemy, Eleazer ascended accordingly. Long before he was clear of the powder-smoke that hung like a dense fog-bank in the almost windless air, he realized that the high-flying cannon-ball that had shot away the spanker-boom was but one of many. Solid-shot shrieked and whistled past continuously, cutting the corvette's rigging and spars. The Saratoga's top-hamper was now suffering far more severely than her hull.

"Why are the English aiming so much higher than they did at the beginning?" Eleazer wondered.

Not until long afterward did he learn the reason. The gallant Commodore Downie had been struck and instantly killed by the recoil of one of his own guns that had been hit on the muzzle by a Yankee ball; the hands of his crushed and shattered watch marking the very second of his death. Deprived of their veteran commander, the British gunners, as young and inexperienced as their opponents, began to fire faster and more wildly. Most of the quoins or wedges that were used to prop up the breeches of the guns gradually worked loose and fell away, raising the muzzles more and more.

Ten feet below the mizzen-top the smoke-fog thinned till Eleazer could see about him. Hitherto he had thought of the fight only as a duel between the *Confiance* and the *Saratoga*. But now a new and exciting battle-picture was revealed to his eye.

Astern of the corvette the schooner *Ticonderoga*, the sloop *Preble*, and three of the smallest American galleys were being attacked by the British sloop *Finch* and nine big English galleys. The Yankee gunboats, mounting only a twelve-pounder apiece, were being sorely battered and steadily beaten back by the long twenty-fours, eighteens, and thirty-two pounder carronades of their heavier foes.

Emboldened by this and supported by the fire of the gunboats, the *Finch* had furled her canvas and, urged by a dozen long sweeps, was closing in on the apparently silenced *Ticonderoga*. Then, just as the big sloop was close aboard, the schooner poured in a smashing broadside and followed it up with another one.

The *Finch's* bowsprit was shot away, most of her guns dismounted and nearly half her crew killed or wounded. Utterly disabled, she drifted away to leeward with trailing sweeps. Eleazer saw the current ground her on the shoal near Crab Island and the convalescents' two-gun battery open fire. At the second shot, the white ensign fluttered down from the *Finch's* peak.

One of the enemy had struck! But even as Eleazer thought of descending with the good news he saw the gain canceled. The American sloop *Preble*, hammered to splinters by the bow guns of the British galleys, cut her cables and drifted inshore, not

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toward Crab Island but in the direction of Plattsburg.

Following her line of retreat, Eleazer saw dense clouds of powder-smoke hanging over the ruined village and the forts and batteries on both banks of the Saranac. He could see the flash of the British guns and the bursting mortar-shells and Congreve war-rockets, though the sound was lost in the nearer roar of the naval fight.

All this time the land-battle had been raging, and Macomb and his fifteen hundred were still holding out. Through the shifting smoke-clouds Eleazer caught a fleeting heart-thrilling glimpse of the Stars and Stripes still flying from the tall flagstaff of Fort Moreau.

AGAIN he was about to go below when he was arrested by the sight of what was now going on astern.

Three of the nine British galleys had been put out of action by the *Ticonderoga's* guns. The remaining six now closed in together on the schooner, their bow-chasers sweeping her rail with grape-shot, their marines plying her with musketry and looking eagerly for the moment when they would be near enough to leap aboard and clear her deck with the bayonet. Nearer and nearer they pushed up till two were close enough to grapple her rail with boat-hooks.

Up sprang the gallant Royal Marines, crossing their bayonets with the boarding-pikes of the Yankee tars. With pike-point and cutlas-edge the *Ticonderoga's* small-arms men met and beat back the swarming boarders, while their comrades stood unflinchingly to their guns and answered the galleys shot for shot. When the matches proved defective and would not burn, little Midshipman Hiram Paulding, a boy of sixteen, ran from twelve-pounder to twelve-pounder, firing each piece by snapping his pistol at the touch-hole.

The *Ticonderoga's* commander, Lieutenant Cassin, mounted the taffrail to have a better view of the enemy and paced coolly back and forth through a hail-storm of grape and musketry as he ordered his gunners to ram home double charges of canister and bags of musket-balls.

At such close range the effect was fearful. So great was the slaughter among the galleys' crews that some had scarcely enough effectives left to man the oars when at length they drew off, baffled and beaten.

Fascinated by the sight, Eleazer lost all count of time. He was roused by some one laying down from aloft and pausing beside him on the shrouds. It was the infantry corporal who had been stationed with a squad of sharpshooters in the mizzen-top, and his men were dropping after him through the lubber's-hole and following him toward the deck.

"Why are you leaving your post?" demanded Eleazer.

"Sick and tired of roostin' up thar with nothin' to do 'cept comb cannon balls outen our hair," drawled the corporal. "That big Britisher's clean out o' musket-shot and showin' no signs of drawin' nigher. I figured we'd be a durned sight usefuler helpin' haul away at them cannons down under. Guess you'd better climb down while you've still got suthin' to climb by, mister. These ropes are gettin' sceercer every minute."

The advice was sound—far sounder than the *Saratoga's* standing and running rigging, most of which was hanging from the chipped and splintered masts like ribbons on a May-pole. Scrambling down to the poop, Eleazer looked for the commodore.

He discovered him just in time to see a large solid-shot strike MacDonough's chest and hurl him across the quarter-deck to fall, limp and apparently lifeless, at Eleazer's feet. Again the despairing cry went up that the commodore was killed.

Kneeling beside the body, Eleazer was astounded and overjoyed to find MacDonough alive and apparently uninjured. By what miracle had he escaped being torn to pieces? Even a spent shot would have crushed in his breast-bone.

He looked about for the missile, saw it, and sickened with horror. It was no cannon ball but a human head, shot from some seaman's shoulders and sent hurtling against the commodore's chest.

In a few minutes MacDonough opened his eyes. Eleazer helped him to his feet and reported briefly on what he had seen.

"Very good, Mr. Williams. How is it with the head of the line, Mr. Platt?"

A diminutive middy, who had just returned aboard the flagship after a lively boat-trip with orders, reported with obviously suppressed excitement:

"Sir, the British sloop *Chubb*, endeavoring to turn our line, had her boom, bowsprit and cable shot away, drifted in among our gunboats and was forced to strike. But

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our galleys have been fought to a standstill, and the *Eagle* is hard pressed both by the *Linnet* and the forward guns of the *Confiance*. Her springs have been shot away and the brig has come up into the wind so that she is being raked by the *Linnet* without a chance to reply. Captain Henly regrets to report, sir, that if this keeps up he must soon cut his cables and endeavor to take up another position under sail."

"Very good, Mr. Platt," said the commodore composedly. "What is it, bosun?"

The *Saratoga's* boatswain, a man-o'-war's man of the old school, who had fought under MacDonough against the pirates of Tripoli, pulled his grizzled forelock and reported ceremoniously—

"Beggin' your honor's pardon, sir; Mr. Gamble's killed and both guns of his division out of action, sir."

"Dismounted?"

"Number One's dismounted, sir, by a solid-shot that came in through the port, smashed the carriage and split the quoin while Mr. Gamble was a-stoopin' down to take a peep through the sights. Half the quoin was driven against the fust lieutenant's chest and killed him without breakin' the skin, sir.

"And while I was examinin' of his injuries, sir, them fresh-water farm-hands at Number Two up and jammed the piece so bad it can't be fired nor yet unloaded, sir."

"Lay forward and see what you can do about it, Mr. Williams," ordered MacDonough. "Poor Gamble—I was to have been best man at his wedding."

Hastening forward, Eleazer was horrified at the fearful carnage in the waist. Shattered corpses and severed limbs were strewn about the deck; men were being struck down faster than the dead could be thrown overboard or the wounded carried below to the packed and reeking sick-bay and the improvised surgery in the ward-room.

The little powder-boys, darting up from the magazine hatch, leaped over mangled men writhing in their death-agony and splashed through pools of blood as they ran with fresh powder-charges to the belching guns. Iron and wood had suffered as well as flesh and blood; of the nine carronades in the starboard battery, four were still firing but the other five lay broken and silent among the broken, silent bodies of their crews.

REACHING the fo'csle, Eleazer found the crew of Number Two Gun—four infantrymen and five very amateurish-looking sailors, vainly belaboring with rammers, sponges and handspikes the long twenty-four-pounder, which had been run in and its muzzle depressed, to loosen and dislodge the obdurate load.

Eleazer picked up the priming-iron, thrust it into the touch-hole and encountered unyielding metal. At least one solid-shot had been rammed home before instead of after the powder-charge. Going to the muzzle, he explored with the primer and discovered another round-shot, wedged tight with wadding, about four inches inside!

Heaven alone knew how many more balls and how many charges of powder were sandwiched in between. It would be a long and ticklish job to unload the piece even after the metal had cooled and contracted.

"Stand clear!" he ordered the crew.

Then, even as Eleazer was looking about him for useful employment for himself and them, he heard the pipe of a whistle and a bawl from the bosun:

"Lay for'ard the fire-department! Form bucket-brigade to douse fire on the fo'csle!"

Flames were crackling and pungent woodsmoke pouring up from the shot-shattered deck-beams and planking about the wreckage of the demolished capstan.

"Pick up that match-tub and dump it on the fire," Eleazer commanded two of the gunners. "The rest of you scatter out and find buckets quick!"

The other men who came running up with pails in their hands he formed into a double line to the port rail and stationed two hands in the forechains to dip and fill the buckets as fast as they were emptied and passed back. Hissing steam rose from the heart of the now diminished fire, where the bosun was hewing with a mighty broadax like a viking at his foeman's helm.

"'Vast heaving!" he coughed through the reek. "Pass me a hand-spike. Stand clear! Thar she goes!"

A glowing, spluttering ball, that gave off clouds of steam and left a charred track in its wake, trundled across the deck and dropped overboard through one of the many gaps in the starboard bulwarks.

"What was that, bosun?" asked Eleazer.

"Red-hot shot from the *Confiance*, sir," said the old shellback, wiping his streaming

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eyes. "Second time they've set us afire in the last half-hour, sir."

Crossing over to port to recall the two men he had posted in the forechains, Eleazer saw through the smoke-fog a dark hull with two white patches of canvas moving slowly toward the *Saratoga's* stern and about a pistol-shot inshore. He made out the American ensign at the stranger's masthead and knew that she must be the *Eagle*, cut adrift and vainly trying to beat up against the strong current and the weak, shifting wind back to the line of battle.

A round-shot—a twelve-pounder by the shrill scream of it—flew deafeningly close past Eleazer's right ear and smashed the slide of a carronade in the waist. Realizing that the shot had come straight over the bows, he looked ahead and saw through the dense powder-smoke the flash of a second discharge and then a third.

Eleazer knew by this that the *Linnet* must have disposed of the American galleys and shifted her moorings till her broadside bore on the *Saratoga*. With the brig athwart her bows and the frigate on her beam, the corvette was caught between two fires. Her consorts had not a gun to bear, and the flagship herself had only four left and those were being rapidly put out of action.

A misloaded carronade jammed; a second was struck and disabled by a raking shot from the *Linnet*. Then a well-aimed ball from the *Confiance* hit the trunnion of the commodore's own long twenty-four-pounder and dismounted the gun. The only piece left in the *Saratoga's* starboard battery was a ponderous forty-two-pounder carronade. Gorged with shot by its greenhorn crew, the short, heavy gun recoiled with such violence that it broke the navel-bolt, flew off its carriage and disappeared breech foremost down the main-hatch.

Eleazer gave a great groan and leaned against the charred and ruined capstan. All their desperate valor had been in vain. The battle was lost, the British fleet had won control of the lake, Macomb and his little army were trapped and doomed, and all New York lay open to the invader.

"Stand by to cut away bower cable!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered the bosun, running up on the fo'csle and stationing himself by the bridle-port like an old-time headsman with upheaved ax.

Roused from his depression, Eleazer watched and listened with eager interest. Was the flagship about to drift from her anchorage as the *Eagle* had done? Had they still a chance to renew the fight?

Through a pause in the firing he heard the commodore say to Mr. Brum, the sailing-master, on the poop—

"Let go stream-anchor astern."

A heavy splash and the master replied—

"Stream-anchor let go astern, sir."

"Cut away bower cable!" thundered MacDonough through a speaking trumpet.

The bosun's broadax flashed down and shore through the stout hemp, the last strands parting with a twang.

"Bower cable cut away, sir!" he reported.

"Rouse in the starboard kedge-line!" ordered the commodore. "All hands aft and on the line! Haul away, lads; we'll beat them yet!"

Inspired by MacDonough's confident tone and utterly disregarding the raking fire from the *Linnet* and an occasional red-hot shot from the *Confiance*, a mixed gang of officers, sailors and soldiers tailed on and walked away with the line running from the starboard quarter to a kedge planted broad off the starboard bow.

Eleazer was on the point of running aft to join them, when a boy's voice called his name—

"Please, Mr. Williams, lend us a hand here."

Little Mr. Midshipman Platt and seven big seamen were laying forward along the port gangway, tugging the end of another cable that they seemed to have fished up out of the lake. Into the eyes of the ship they dragged it.

"Lay out on the bowsprit, Conway," ordered the child sternly to an obedient giant. "Pass the bight under; fetch it in, Jenkins. Mind the cutwater—dip the line handsomely!"

"All clear, sir," reported Conway.

"Tail on and walk away with it aft," commanded the midshipmite.

Up the starboard side of the ship they hauled the cable, meeting and passing the larger working-party who were hauling in the taut kedge-line over the starboard quarter.

Reaching the quarter-deck, Eleazer found himself confronted by Mr. Brum. He was struck by the peculiar fact that the elderly and somewhat dandified sailing-master was now stark naked except for his shoes and a dotted blue neckerchief hastily converted

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into an apron. A splinter had just knocked him down and neatly stripped off his clothes without scratching his skin.

"'Vast heaving!" the sailing-master called to the working-party. "Pass your line abaft the bitts, Mr. Platt. Cut away that starboard kedge-line. All hands on the other line. Haul away, all!"

A jubilant chant went up from the motley gang on the new line running to another kedge planted off where the *Saratoga's* port bows had been at the opening of the action:

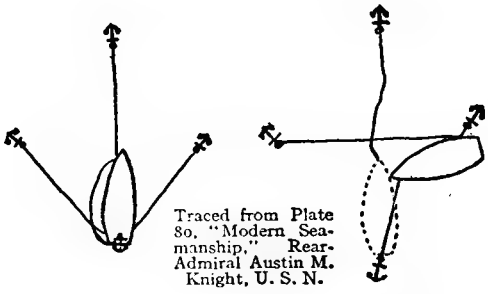
"Haul on the bowline, the bowline, the bowline!
Haul on the bowline, the bowline haul!"

High and triumphant rose the musical piping of the bosun's silver whistle as they snatched the dripping cable aboard. For the first time Eleazer realized that the *Saratoga* was actually moving beneath his feet. Then before he grasped the full meaning of this he thrilled to a command he had never thought to hear again—

"Number Thirteen's crew to the gun!"

Letting go the line, he sprang up on the poop. There, totally uninjured and ready for action, was the "opposite number" of his

The *Saratoga* at the Battle of Lake Champlain, September 11th, 1814



Traced from Plate 80, "Modern Seamanship," Rear-Admiral Austin M. Knight, U. S. N.

Figure 1 **Figure 2**

old gun that had been smashed and dismounted an hour ago. The ship was swinging about until the port battery was being brought to bear.

Five of his former gun-crew and seven new hands jumped to their places with joyous grins.

"Cast loose and provide! Run out! Remove apron! Look to your priming!"

"Primed and loaded she be, sir!"

Peering along the sights and out through the port, Eleazer saw that they were swinging clear of their own smoke, which had been thinning and lifting ever since the cessation of the *Saratoga's* fire. Now he could see the *Confiance.*

Her lofty topsides battered and beaten in at a hundred points, shot-marked from stem to stern and from water-line to rail, her dismounted guns staring at the sky or lolling askew out of their jagged, shapeless ports, her tall masts splintered and torn, her canvas in fluttering rags and half her spars and rigging shot away, the English flagship had suffered a fearful mauling. Of the three hundred and twenty-five officers and men aboard her, less than twenty were still alive and unwounded.

Those few die-hards had made a sturdy attempt to warp her around by the spring on her cable. But they had only succeeded in bringing her head up into a most dangerous position.

"Ready!" cried Eleazer as the sights came on. "Fire!"

He saw the twenty-four-pound ball tear through the little knot of Englishmen manning the pivot-gun on the frigate's fo'csle.

"Number Twelve, fire!" shouted the commodore.

Before the long twenty-fours on the poop could be reloaded and run out, the carronades in the waist thundered a long, resounding salvo, echoed by the forward division. The entire port battery was in action. By his wise forethought and superb seamanship, MacDonough had doubled the fighting value of his ship.

A second broadside and a third followed swiftly. Then the Yankee commodore commanded—

"Cease firing!"

The shot-torn white ensign was coming down from the frigate's peak. The *Confiance* had struck.

"Mr. Lavalette, order away the first cutter and take possession of the prize," continued MacDonough calmly. "Mr. Brum, spring the ship around till our guns bear on the *Linnet.* Mr. Platt, take my gig and set Mr. Williams ashore.

"Please present my compliments to General Macomb, Mr. Williams, and inform him that it has pleased the Almighty to grant us a complete victory over the British squadron. Let me thank you for your very valuable services aboard this ship, Mr. Williams.

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Pray offer the general my congratulations on the gallant and successful defense he is making ashore."

SEATED beside young Platt in the stern-sheets of the gig, Eleazer looked back over his shoulder at the dauntless and hopeless last stand of the defiant little English brig. At last, hulled repeatedly between wind and water till her lower deck was a foot awash, the *Linnet* hauled down her colors.

"Their galleys have struck—we've bagged the lot," exulted the midshipman. "Hallo, what's that?"

A lee gun had been fired from the surrendered *Confiance*.

"Treachery!" cried the excited boy. "Look, their galleys are making off!"

As a matter of fact it was pure accident. The American boarding officer, picking his way aft along the frigate's encumbered deck, had struck the taut lock-string of one of the starboard guns. Its discharge seemed to have been taken as a signal by the British gunboats. Pulling what few oars they had left and without hoisting a single ensign, the twelve battered galleys crept slowly out toward the open lake.

"Why don't our gunboats pursue?" fretted young Platt.

"Probably because they are too much damaged themselves," suggested Eleazer. "They seem to be baling and patching hard just to stay afloat."

"Then the British row-galleys will get clear," declared the midshipman. "For I'll lay you a month's pay that there isn't a mast in either squadron that could bear sail. Floating wrecks, that's all they are, on both sides.

"I see the soldiers are still scuffling around on shore," he continued scornfully. "But the real fight is over."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SARANAC RUNS RED

STANDING at the little wharf near Fort Scott, Eleazer hurried across the peninsula, seeking General Macomb. He found him on the north-east bastion of Fort Moreau, surrounded by his staff and coolly studying the long line of British batteries blazing away across the river.

"Splendidly done!" cried Macomb on hearing the glorious news. "Let the entire garrison be informed at once, Colonel Smith. It will hearten the men."

"They appear to be standing the bombardment very well, sir," said Eleazer, looking at the steady lines of regulars manning the ramparts. "And our defenses seem to have suffered very slightly."

"Great cry and little wool," snorted Colonel Melanchthon Smith, commanding Fort Moreau. "Haven't lost a gun and hardly a man, and we've beaten back the only attempt the Britishers have made to cross the river. Here they come again, by the upper bridge."

Picking their way along the stripped and shaky tie-beams of the bridge or wading through the shallow water between its piers, a few hundred British light infantrymen and Canadian voltigeurs pushed pluckily forward to mid-stream. There they were swept by a raking cross-fire of solid-shot, grape and musketry from two forts and a dozen redoubts and block-houses. Realizing that the attempt was hopeless, the unsupported little storming-party fell back in good order.

"It is murder to advance men by driblets like that," said Macomb indignantly. "Ah, our boys have heard the news."

The shout of triumph at the repulse of the storming-party swelled to a tremendous, exultant cheer that rose again and again from every part of the American lines. The smoke of the naval battle had cleared away, and the Stars and Stripes could be clearly seen at the mastheads of the captured fleet.

Hoof-beats pounded across the drawbridge of Fort Moreau. In through the gate and across the parade-ground galloped a handsome black horse ridden by a gorgeously uniformed militia staff officer.

"Five thousand British regulars have crossed the Saranac at Pike's Cantonment!" he cried excitedly. "We repulsed them three times, but they drove us back with the bayonet. The New York militia are retiring on the Vermont Volunteers. General Mooers begs you to send him as many regulars as you can spare, sir."

"I can not spare a single bayonet," answered Macomb, looking down from the bastion and pointing with his sword at the ominous red masses drawn up just out of cannon-shot on the opposite bank.

"Tell General Mooers to rally on the Vermonters and hold his ground at all

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hazards. Stay, I will send him one man. Mr. Williams, mount and ride to the upper ford. Tell the militia that the enemy's fleet is captured and that their army must and shall be beaten."

An orderly led out a wiry little gray mare, on whose back Eleazer soon overtook and passed the returning militia officer on his winded mount. Leaving the forts behind him, he spurred to the end of the peninsula and into the wooded country beyond. There in the woods he soon lost sight of the lake and the fight, though he could still hear the thunder of the guns and the unceasing Yankee cheers.

Gray showed through the green ahead: the homespun uniforms of the twenty-five hundred Vermonters who had quietly donned their "regimentals," shouldered their flintlocks, assembled and crossed the lake without waiting for the orders that never came. Regiment after regiment had embodied itself and gone to the front under its own militia officers in calm defiance of the Peace Party governor—who as soon as he heard of the victory promptly issued a patriotic proclamation, giving himself all the credit.

Eleazer, as he rode past the halted Green Mountain Boys, shouted the splendid news—

"MacDonough has beaten the British galleys and captured the rest of their fleet!"

"Whoopee!" yelled exultant Vermont.

The New Yorkers, straggling out of the woods on the far side of a broad, stump-dotted clearing, checked their retreat at the joyous sound. In another moment they too were cheering.

"Halt right here, boys!" bellowed General Mooers. "Let the redcoats do the retreating from now on. Line of battle, form!"

Drummers began to beat the long roll. The multicolored mob sorted itself out into rapidly growing groups of green and white, blue and buff, light blue with scarlet facings, red and yellow, brown, gray, butternut and buckskin with deer-tail pompons. Companies, battalions and regiments took shape and life.

"Dress up, Miller's Rifles!" ordered General Mooers, careering about on his old white mare as he did on Muster Day.

"Colonel Joiner's Regiment, take ground to the right! Essex County, fall in on the left of the 37th. Steady, boys, steady—here they come!"

SCARLET was gleaming through the woods in their front. At least one entire British regiment was deployed on either side of the road, pushing steadily through the heavy first-growth timber and halting at regular intervals to discharge the prettiest possible platoon-firing. Large numbers of their bullets were afterward dug out of the trees at an average elevation of fifteen feet above the ground.

Far better aimed was the answering American fire. But Eleazer felt no undue elation. Oft repeated and bitter experience had taught him what to expect. Soon the redcoats would stop wasting lead and charge home with the bayonet. The least trained of the Yankee militia would run at once; the better drilled units would stand their ground and inflict heavy punishment on their advancing foes till the British were almost upon them, and then they too would break and scatter to the rear.

But this time it was different.

"They're giving ground!" gasped the honestly surprized General Mooers to Eleazer. "I can see their knapsacks there through the trees. So help me Moses, the Britishers are falling back!"

Slowly, reluctantly but unmistakably the British regulars were facing about and beginning to retreat.

"Saratoga! Saratoga!" yelled the New Yorkers.

"Bennington! Bennington!" echoed the Green Mountain Boys, crowding up on either flank.

A fife-and-drum corps swung into "Yankee Doodle," and the long line surged forward, chanting a lately composed and popular stanza:

> "Then send your fleets and armies o'er,
> To ravish, burn and plunder;
> And we will meet them at the shore,
> And drive them back, by thunder!
>
> Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
> Yankee Doodle Dandy!
> Mind the fife and keep the step,
> And with the girls be handy!"

What was left of their alinement and formation promptly fell to pieces among the trees and undergrowth as soon as they struck the woods. But every Yankee militiaman went ahead and fought on his own hook, taking cover and shooting like the deer-hunter he was and the Indian-fighter his father had been before him.

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Keeping at a respectful distance from Brown Bess and her bayonet, he and his fellows harried and sniped the flanks and rear of the sullenly retreating British regulars, and picked off scores of officers and men.

Stung beyond endurance, a company of the 76th Foot counter-charged with the bayonet. Their nimble foes slipped away before them till the redcoats ran out of breath. Then suddenly the militia came swarming back on every side and in overwhelming numbers.

"Cut your way through, lads!" exhorted the English captain.

But his men threw down their muskets and surrendered with amazing willingness. When Eleazer rode up he found the redcoats amicably chatting with their captors and sampling the potent contents of their canteens.

"Orl I arsk, Yank," declared a stocky little Londoner between swallows of hard cider, "is to lay me 'ands on that blank, blank, blankety-dashed-blank stinkin' coward, Sir George Prevost!"

"Saw his coat-tails myself once, up to Sackett's Harbor," answered the New Yorker who had supplied the cider. "He skedaddled mighty easy that time, and looks to me like he's fixin' to do it again. Don't blame you fellers a bit for feelin' riled."

Even the British captain and his subalterns could hardly keep from showing their anger and disgust. They knew that in a little while their column, of which only the advance guard had been engaged, would have swept aside the militia and advanced to the landward walls of the American forts. They felt certain that no matter how pluckily Macomb and his fifteen hundred regulars might have defended themselves the ramparts would have been stormed, the batteries taken in the rear and the defeat afloat avenged by a victory ashore. They had just heard of the disaster to the fleet and were burning to even the score.

And then just as they were about to win they were ordered to retreat. Small wonder that the "Old Peninsulars" were "feelin' riled."

At the bank of the Saranac the pursuers prudently paused, deploying along the shore and taking pot-shots at the British rear-guard as it waded slowly back across the ford. Covering the withdrawal of the column, a regiment was drawn up behind the high screen of willows and alders on the other bank, firing across at the Americans with uncommonly good aim.

"Canadians," thought Eleazer as he rode down close to the bank.

Then he realized from the sound that these men were not armed with rifles but deep-voiced, smooth-bore muskets. Through the smoke and the foliage his keen eyes caught a glimpse of the white and orange of Meuron's Swiss.

In his anxiety to see, he had thoughtlessly ridden down to the water's edge, where he himself could be plainly seen. He felt the little gray mare sink down under him so abruptly that before he could free himself Eleazer was caught with his right leg pinned fast beneath the fallen and dying mare.

Across the river a familiar voice cried out excitedly:

"Mon Dieu, c'est lui-même! Cessez le feu! En avant, les Suisses! À la bayonette!"

Under-officers echoed the commands in guttural German. Meuron's Regiment ceased firing at once, fixed bayonets and plunged through the willows and down the low bank into the river. The Saranac was so shallow at this place and time that even in mid-stream it was less than waist deep for a considerable distance both above and below the ford, which the last of the redcoats had just vacated.

In columns of platoons, the front rank lowering their bayoneted muskets to the charge, the rear ranks with shouldered arms; the center battalion of the Swiss advanced across the ford. The wing battalions were deployed in line to right and left, while the drums and bugles rolled and pealed an inspiring quickstep close behind them, and at their head, in the splendid uniform of the Garde du Corps, rode the Marquis de Fenouil.

A BRITISH staff officer spurred after them, broke through the line and reined up his mount beside de Fenouil's. Eleazer recognized young Major Brandsby, and was struck by the fact that he was treating the so-called attaché as if he were the real commander of the mercenaries. By Brandsby's expression and gestures he was evidently ordering the marquis to recall his men and resume the retreat at once.

But de Fenouil was in no mood to respect

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the authority of Sir George Prevost. In two minutes more he would be across the Saranac and have Eleazer Williams safe in his hands.

Nor had the marquis any respect for the Yankee militia now thronging the wooded shore before him. He knew that they would not stand before a British bayonet charge, and his Swiss were as brave and well disciplined as any English regiment and little less skilled with the cold steel.

What he failed to realize was they spoke the wrong language and wore white coats instead of red.

Two wars had taught the American soldier a very solid respect for the British regular. But for the German-speaking mercenary he had only hatred and contempt. Unluckily for Meuron's Swiss, whose campaigning record in America had been as clean as their predecessors' had been foul, their opponents promptly mistook them for loathed and ancient foes.

"Hessians, boys!" shouted General Strong to his Vermonters. "Are you going to give ground to *them?*"

"No!" roared the Green Mountain Boys and New Yorkers together. "Remember Bennington! Remember Trenton! Kill the —— Hessians!"

Every militiaman who had shamelessly run from the same weapon in British hands less than an hour before, now stood ready to meet the bayonet with the clubbed butt of his rifle. But first that rifle was discharged, with cool and deadly aim, into the solid line before him.

Beneath that fearful blast of lead Eleazer saw the ranks of the mercenaries crumble and shred away. He saw Major Brandsby fall dying from his wounded and rearing horse. He heard the quickstep fall into a discord and die away as the astounded regiment came to an instinctive halt.

But the Marquis de Fenouil had escaped uninjured and undismayed. Sword in hand, his thin lips curved in a scornful smile, he seemed the incarnation of all that was best and bravest in the Old Régime.

"*En avant, mes braves!*" he cried. "*À bas la canaille!*"

But the canaille were not to be put down. More and more militiamen came into action, firing while their comrades loaded until the crack of the Yankee rifles merged into one unbroken fusillade.

The slender, uplifted blade of de Fenouil's court-sword suddenly parted from the hilt. His tricorn was shot from his head; two bullets clipped his horse's mane. An instant later horse and rider went down together and disappeared beneath the blood-stained waters of the Saranac.

Eleazer saw Doisy the valet dart forward to rescue his master, only to die beside him. He saw the bullets splashing like rain-drops all over the surface of the stream. He saw the mercenaries falling back, rallied and directed by a gray-mustached officer, one side of whose white coat was now as red as any Englishman's. He heard the firing slacken and die away as the rearmost of Prevost's army trudged away on the northward road.

General Mooers himself and some of his Clinton County men found Eleazer lying by the ford and helped him out from under the dead mare.

"My ——, boy, you're wounded!" exclaimed the general excitedly. "Look at your left hand."

Glancing down, Eleazer saw that his fingers were dripping red. For the first time he became aware of a sharp pain in the upper part of his arm.

"It's only a scratch," he answered, flexing his wrist and elbow. "Not worth bothering the doctors about. Heaven knows they will be only too busy as it is."

CHAPTER XV

THE TESTIMONY OF COLONEL MEURON

"MY SON."

Eleazer opened his eyes and looked up into the shrewd, wrinkled face of his foster-father, old Tom Williams.

"A wounded Frenchman, the war-chief of the whitecoats, is waiting at the door of our lodge. He says he has something to tell you before he dies. He is dying now."

"Then let us not keep him waiting, my father."

Eleazer tried to rise from his sick-bed but was forced to fall back on it again. That slight, uncared-for wound had cost him dear.

Hardly another musket-shot had been fired after the one that had scored Eleazer's left arm by the upper ford of the Saranac on September 11th. But all the rest of that day and far into the night the great guns

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had roared from every fort and battery on both banks of the river.

Soon after sundown the equinoctial storm had burst with great violence and raged till dawn. When the rain ceased and the sun rose next morning, the astonished Americans discovered that the invaders had disappeared.

Overwhelmed by the defeat and capture of Commodore Downie's squadron and panic-stricken by Eleazer's crafty reports of danger to his flank and rear, Sir George Prevost turned and ran home with his tail between his legs. He left all his wounded and vast quantities of military stores behind him as he fled. By midnight his great army had silently broken camp and was marching back to Canada.

As soon as possible the American cavalry and light infantry and the rangers of the Secret Corps hurried after in pursuit. But the retreating British had had so long a start and were pressing on at so brisk a pace that the pursuers did little except cover the escape of hundreds of deserters who quit in sheer disgust.

Their sentiments were cordially shared by all Canada and the British Government. A mountain-slide of wrathful denunciation roared down on the luckless head of Sir George Prevost. A court martial was ordered to investigate his conduct of the campaign. Broken in health and overwhelmed with shame, he died before it could be convened.

Eleazer's part in the pursuit was to bring up two batteries of six-pounders in support of the light troops and the Essex Dragoons. Starting at seven o'clock on the morning of the 12th, he found the road a well-stirred hasty pudding of mud and water, in which the horses sank to their knees and the guns, limbers and caissons to their axles. Fourteen thousand men and nearly a thousand vehicles had already plowed their way through torrents of rain along that soft dirt road. After that it was a job for light-draft gunboats.

By noon Eleazer and his two batteries had wallowed eight semi-liquid miles. Then as they were righting an overturned and half-submerged six-pounder a mounted orderly splashed up with orders for them to return at once. Back they trundled and trudged, through the renewed rainstorm and a cold northwest wind, to Plattsburg.

They arrived after sundown, exhausted, drenched, shivering and empty-stomached. Eleazer's wound was throbbing painfully, his temperature was soaring upward like a rocket and altogether he was in a very fit state for the doctor's hands.

Observing this, General Macomb cut short his congratulations and offered to send for the post surgeon at once.

"Please let me await my turn," implored Eleazer. "There are hundreds of cases far more serious than mine, and the surgeons are few and overworked. My father's house in Plattsburg, being remote from the rest of the town, escaped the fire and was not hit in the bombardment. If I could go home now and rest——"

"Go and rest as long as you need to, Mr. Williams," said the general, patting Eleazer's unwounded shoulder and shaking his hand. "If you are not better by tomorrow, then the best doctor and nurse in camp shall attend you, whether you will or no."

But a doctor and nurse were already on the way. Tallow Jack had long since sent a summons by mysterious channels to Ogdensburg and the depths of the Adirondacks. Old Tom Williams and his wife Konwatewenteta hastened back to Plattsburg and took assiduous care of Eleazer.

Clean bandages, sweat-baths and awful-tasting purges and drenches compiled by the half-breed herb-doctor soothed the wound, broke the fever and left Eleazer feeling weak and limp, but clear-headed and on the road to recovery, two days later, when a wounded man was brought to their door.

Looking up with interest from the camp cot where he lay by the living-room fireplace —it had turned cold again and his own unheated bedroom was bitterly chill—he saw his foster-father throw open the front door and beckon to those outside.

Up the front steps and into the room tramped a gigantic Irishman, still wearing his scarlet coat and tall shako with the brass numerals of the 88th Foot, and followed by a lanky New York militiaman. Between them, on a stretcher improvised from a blanket and two saplings, they carried the gray-mustached officer whom Eleazer had seen rallying the mercenaries at the ford. But now the broad red stain on his white coat had dried to a rusty brown and his face was as gray as his long mustache and the three day's stubble on his fallen cheeks.

"Pardon me, your Majesty, for appearing

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like this in the presence," he murmured apologetically in French. "But I can not stand, nor have I long to stay."

Eleazer felt a great shock of surprize at being so addressed, and a far greater shock of revulsion at the ghastly snobbery of courts that made this sorely wounded old gentleman apologize for not rising.

"Quick, Jack, fetch in the other cot and place it beside mine," he ordered. "Lay him down carefully, you two."

"It's himself will be wanting a priest, I'm thinking," said the Irish deserter as he eased the stretcher out from under the wounded officer, now on the second cot.

"*Vous êtes Catholique, n'est-ce pas, monsieur? Désirez-vous un prêtre?*" asked Eleazer.

"No, no—I am a Calvinist of Geneva. But I desire a notary or a magistrate to take down and register my sworn statement—a declaration of the greatest importance. For three days I have tried to explain to the American doctors. But they knew no language but their own, till one came who spoke a little German and allowed me to be carried here. An army surgeon newly arrived, he knew nothing of the local magistrates."

"The civil authorities have fled before the invasion," explained Eleazer. "Run, Jack, and see whether Judge Black or Squire Haskins has returned to town and fetch either of them at once."

Tallow Jack departed, together with the stretcher-bearers.

"If your Majesty has an amanuensis at hand it would perhaps be better to begin taking down my statement now and having it sworn to later," suggested the wounded man. "Otherwise it may be too late."

Eleazer signed and spoke briefly to old Williams, who fetched pens, ink and paper from the desk in the other room, propped Eleazer up in bed and found a piece of board for him to write on.

The wounded officer plunged straightway into his narrative, gasping it out in evident fear of being cut short before reaching the end. It ran as follows:

I, JEAN ANTONIN MEURON, colonel and late commander of Meuron's Regiment of Swiss in the army of Sir George Prevost, being of sound mind but wounded in body and feeling myself to be at the point of death, do dictate this statement, which may the All-Merciful Father give me strength to finish and attest:

I was born at Geneva, Switzerland, September 3, 1764. My father, the late Louis Sebastian Meuron, was a soldier of fortune, as our people have been for generations, fighting for many kings and countries but most often for France. He rose to be senior captain of the Swiss Guard at the court of Louis XVI. Through his influence I became an ensign in the same corps in 1785, the same year as the birth of the Dauphin, now Louis XVII.

For the next seven years I was constantly on duty at Versailles or the Tuileries. During that time I saw the infant prince almost daily. His features became firmly imprinted on my mind. I recognized him instantly three days ago in the American ranks.

During that same period I made the acquaintance of the artist Bellanger, a favorite of the Comte d'Artois.

On the fatal 10th of August, 1792, when the Communists of Paris attacked the Tuileries, I was confined to quarters by a severe illness and was unable to take part in the defense. My father was among those massacred after the Swiss Guard, victorious and on the point of dispersing the rabble, were ordered to cease firing by the king's command.

I was overlooked by the Communists and escaped from France. Less than three years later, in the spring of 1795, I returned openly and unafraid, as did thousands of other *émigrés*. The Reign of Terror was over, the surviving Jacobins were being hunted down like wild beasts, the tide of revolution was ebbing fast.

The weakened and exhausted republic seemed at its last hour. Without, the Second Coalition was mustering its fleets and armies for the blockade and invasion of France. Within, the Vendéans in the North, the Chouans in the West, were in open revolt, while the whole South was seething with discontent and reaction. In Paris the mobs of the *faubourgs*, the National Guards of the Sections, the very police, were now more royalist than republican. The tottering and terrified Convention had no guard but a few thousand regulars. In short, the situation had reversed itself.

"Bellanger," I said to my old friend, whom I knew to be of the inner circle, "they say that the child prisoner of the Temple will soon be released and recognized as Louis XVII."

"His days in the Temple are already numbered," replied my friend assuredly.

Soon afterward I learned that Bellanger had fled from Paris and taken a ship at Le Havre. A week later came the crushing news of the king's death in the Temple. His uncle at once proclaimed himself Louis XVIII and we persevered in his name.

But again the tide had turned. General Hoche put down the revolt in La Vendée. And on the Day of the Sections, the 13th Vendémiaire, when the royalists of Paris rose and marched on the Convention, we found the guards and their guns commanded by young General Bonaparte. And *he* did not give the command to cease fire too soon.

Nineteen years later my regiment entered Paris with the vanguard of the Allies. The street-boys mocked us for having brought Louis XVIII with us in the baggage-train.

In a bypath of the Tuileries gardens I came face to face with the living ghost of Bellanger.

"You have prospered, my colonel," he said wanly.

"More than you, I fear, *mon vieux*. If I can be of assistance——"

"You can. America is the —— of a country for an artist."

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"You have been in America!" I exclaimed. "Tell me, what of these rumors that Louis XVII is alive and in that country? All Paris is murmuring with them."

"I have whispered in the ears of all Paris," answered Bellanger. "Tomorrow I shall shout to all France. Tonight I shall tell everything to my old friend Jean Meuron. But first, my honest Swiss, take and keep these for me."

Bellanger handed me an old leather wallet stuffed with papers and asked my address. I gave it to him, together with a small loan.

"*Au revoir*," he said in parting. "Should I fail to return or repay, you will find ample security there."

Next morning Bellanger was found stabbed through the heart in an alley off the lower end of the Rue Sarette. There were many such murders in Paris at that time. The police investigated but arrested no one.

Within the week I was asked by the Minister of War whether I would be willing to take my regiment to North America, nominally in the British service, but to obey the orders of the Marquis de Fenouil. The terms were very good and I accepted, as did most of my officers and men.

Not till then did I have leisure to examine the papers left me by Bellanger. They are a complete confession of his actions as an agent of the so-called Louis XVIII. They give the entire story of the abduction from the Temple, and of Bellanger's life in America, together with original letters, vouchers, instructions, and a full list of supporting witnesses in both hemispheres. In short, they fully establish your Majesty's claim to the throne of France.

A hired soldier, I have ever tried to be true to my hire. Though I suspected de Fenouil's errand from that hour, I could not break my word. I have been true to the false Louis XVIII, even to the death.

Now with my dying hands I place the evidence bequeathed me by Bellanger in the hands of Louis XVII.

COLONEL MEURON fumbled feebly at the buttons of his blood-stained uniform coat.

"Help him, my father," said Eleazer. "He would give me that which he carries in his bosom."

Tom Williams slid a deft hand inside the wounded man's coat and shirt. He drew out an old, worn wallet, strung on a thong and darkened with new-dried blood.

"*Merci*," murmured the colonel weakly as he saw the old half-breed place it in Eleazer's hand.

Two minutes later Tallow Jack returned —alone.

"Judge no come, squire no come," he announced briefly. "All still down to Ogdensburg. Come back tomorrow, mebbeso."

"*Il n'y a pas de magistrats en ville*," translated Eleazer.

"It is nothing," said Colonel Meuron. "There is already sufficient evidence. Let me sign while yet I may."

With trembling fingers that could barely hold the quill Colonel Meuron scrawled a wavering signature. Tallow Jack and Tom Williams made their marks as attesting witnesses.

"What can I do, now or hereafter, to show my gratitude to you for this supreme act of uncalled-for and undeserved devotion?" asked Eleazer.

"Let this be carved upon my tombstone, Sire," answered Meuron, wearily:

"Here lies one who sold his sword but not his honor."

Silence followed for several minutes. Then the colonel spoke again.

"Will your Majesty deign to examine the papers?"

Unbuckling the stiffened, glued-down strap, Eleazer opened the wallet and looked at the mass of papers within. A clipping from a Paris newspaper lay on top and caught his eye. It was a brief account of the discovery of a murdered man's body in an alley off the Rue Sarette and the identification of the deceased as one Jules Bellanger, artist and newly returned *émigré*.

"Why did the Marquis de Fenouil tell me that Bellanger died in New Orleans?" asked Eleazer.

The dying man smiled contemptuously.

"De Fenouil said that?"

"Yes, while I was his prisoner at Champlain."

"He spoke half the truth. Bellanger did not die in La Nouvelle Orléans, he lived there, the one congenial place in this country, as best he could after de Fenouil ignored his letters and cut off his remittances. They paid him only for the first six months after he brought your Majesty to America. They always cheat their servants."

"They paid—de Fenouil received letters —" stammered Eleazer. "You mean that my being brought to America was known to de Fenouil and others; that it was deliberate and not the result of impulse and panic on the part of Bellanger?"

"He was not given to panics, that one. No coward would have returned, as he did this spring, to Paris and almost certain death. Is not Fouché, the old Terrorist, still at the head of the secret police—is not Talleyrand still in power? Reds, whites, imperialists; they are all wolves of the same pack."

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"But why should I have been rescued from the Temple only to be hidden among Mohawks?"

"Because your Majesty was about to be released and restored by the Convention. Honest and capable physicians might soon have restored and healed your body and mind. A boy king might well reign for half a century. And where would de Provence be then?"

"De Provence? You mean——"

"Your Majesty's uncle, the usurper, the self-styled Louis XVIII. The Comte de Provence had had enough of being the king's younger grandson and of being the king's younger brother. He had no desire to become the king's uncle. So he has made himself king."

"You bring this fearful charge against my uncle?"

"Bellanger makes and proves it—there. The matter rests in your Majesty's own hands."

Closing his eyes, Colonel Meuron relaxed and said no more.

IN HIS own hands!

From under the pillow Eleazer took the unsigned abdication, and placed it with the signed statement of Colonel Meuron and the papers of Bellanger. Here was more than enough to hurl the newly crowned Louis XVIII from his stolen throne.

Bellanger's own intention, however, as a cursory examination of his legacy made clear, had been rather to frighten the usurper into paying blackmail. Save as a last resort, the blackmailer had probably never intended to restore the rightful king, or else he would hardly have let Deacon Nathaniel Ely have the boy brought up a Protestant and a democrat. Probably Bellanger held the same cynical view of such matters as Henry of Navarre.

Foreseeing Napoleon's downfall, Bellanger had shipped at New Orleans on the *Creole*, privateer, and deserted her at Bordeaux. He had reached Paris on the day of the imposing funeral services for the martyred Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, where the omission of any reference to the supposedly dead Louis XVII had set the whole city to wondering.

Bellanger had craftily launched additional rumors. Soon it was publicly declared that the lost prince was in America, while de Fenouil and his master were privately but convincingly informed for the first time that Eleazer Williams was no longer a negligible imbecile. The price of his continued ignorance of his rights would be whatever Jules Bellanger chose to set. Moreover, any attempt to hunt him down and silence him would if successful only result in Eleazer's full enlightenment by Bellanger's discreet and trusty confederate in America.

Beyond that point nothing was revealed by the contents of the wallet. Had Bellanger, sensing Fouché's human bloodhounds on his trail, suddenly come face to face with Meuron in that lonely bypath of the Tuileries gardens and impulsively left the evidence for safekeeping with perhaps the only honest and trustworthy friend he had ever known? Had he been stabbed by an overzealous Government spy or by some forgotten private foe? Who could say?

The one bright spot in the whole dark, foul mass of sordid and selfish intrigue was the honest loyalty of Colonel Meuron. Prince and marquis and artist had blackened their honor, but the mercenary had kept his as true and untarnished as his steel.

And for his reward, the brave old soldier of fortune was dying in exile. Why, thought Eleazer, should Swiss and American citizens have reddened the waters of the Saranac with each other's blood? Why should gallant young Brandsby, toward whom Eleazer's heart had warmed with instinctive friendship, have passed through all the perils of the Peninsula only to be shot down in a petty forest skirmish?

Eleazer's own arm bore an unhealed wound, his nostrils caught the reek of the crowded hospitals, his memory brought back vividly the awful sights and sounds of the *Saratoga's* slaughtering fight. Unlike most pretenders, he had seen real war.

And it was only a small part of an obscure offshoot of the great war that had ravaged Europe almost unceasingly for the past twenty-five years. After a quarter of a century of agony the Old World was now at peace. MacDonough's victory and Prevost's repulse would go far toward bringing peace back to the New World.

"And shall I," considered Eleazer, "throw the whole world back into war that I may sit on a throne? Suppose I make myself King of France, what then?

"The day will come when I must either

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say, as my father said, 'Cease firing', and see my guards slaughtered by the people; or else I must say, like Bonaparte, 'Keep on firing', and see my people slaughtered by the guards."

Bowing his head, he prayed long and earnestly for guidance.

Then, gathering up the parchment, papers and wallet, he threw them deliberately into the blazing log fire.

"Let them burn!" he cried as Tallow Jack, old Tom and Mrs. Williams rushed forward to rescue what they knew must be very precious. "Let them burn, my father and mother. It is better so."

His father and mother! Yes, here were his real parents, his real brother, his true country and his own people. Here was his life-work, to toil beside them, shield them from the despoiler and guide them in the path of salvation. Then and there, at that moment of renunciation, Eleazer Williams found and entered into his kingdom.

Nor did he enter without the sound of trumpets and acclamations. Mellowed by distance, a bugle-call came from across the river, where they were mounting guard at Fort Moreau.

Roused by the call, Colonel Meuron opened his dying eyes. With his last breath the last of the Swiss Guard gasped exultingly—

"Vive le roi!"

UNWEPT, UNHONORED and UNHUNG*

by Frederick J. Jackson

Author of "The Departure of Mr. Cassidy."

BUCK WILLIAMS was young, careless, and *bad!* He was bad twenty-five hundred dollars' worth, for this was the amount of the reward offered by the sun-baked State of New Mexico for the delivery of Buck's person. Furthermore, there were no strings to the offer; delivery could be made on the hoof or in a box.

For several days Buck had been riding across country. He had known nothing of the offer until a fat Mexican deputy-sheriff stuck a gun into his face and placed him under arrest. Buck soon discovered that he was accused of a particularly atrocious murder. As a matter of fact he had been sixty miles from the scene at the time of the crime, but he had no witnesses to prove his alibi.

La Verde County had long been a sufferer from Mexicanitis—the population of little brown brothers outnumbering the white inhabitants about three to one, when it came to voting power. Therefore it followed naturally that many county officers had Mexican blood in their veins. In one court in particular white men invariably got the short end of the stick, and it was in this court that Buck was placed on trial.

Three Mexicans, one after the other, got on the witness stand and swore positively that Buck was the murderer. Twelve American citizens of pure or mixed Mexican blood were on the jury. The verdict was

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guilty. The district attorney was also slightly coffee-colored, as was the superior judge.

As Buck expressed it, he had been given no more of a chance than a fish on Friday. From the look in the mean, dark eye of the judge he knew what the sentence would be.

But Buck had friends in the court-room, two gentlemen of action who were not there with peaceful intentions. One of them was Mr. Slivers Cassidy, a firm believer in direct action and the supremacy of white blood. Mr. Cassidy was much older than Buck and much more careless. He believed that Buck had been framed; that he had been made the goat to protect some Mexican.

Mr. Cassidy winked at Buck's other friend, quietly pulled a Colt from the waistband of his trousers and arose to his feet. So did the other friend. Two young cow-punchers saw the trend of things, and risked their lives, until Cassidy saw their intentions, by bringing weapons from places of concealment and assisting in sticking up the court. They were strangers, and entered the festivities merely through youthful hilarity.

So under cover of four six-guns Buck ran through the one door of the court-room, sprang on to somebody's cayuse and headed south. His friends then backed out of the court-room, locked the door, threw the key up on to the flat roof of the building and hurried to make themselves scarce in that vicinity.

That was not the end of the affair with Mr. Cassidy. He proposed to get the truth if he had to choke every likely suspect in the county to get it.

The windows of the court-room were set with iron bars. The locked door was stout. Therefore considerable time elapsed before the court officials, jury and spectators could break out of the building.

Two days later, before crossing into Mexico, Buck came upon a freshly printed poster, announcing another twenty-five-hundred-dollar reward for his apprehension. Buck tore down the placard, then dropped into an isolated railroad station and sent a telegram, collect, to the governor of the State, who had offered the reward. The message read thus:

> "The small amount of the reward is an insult. This is a —— of a country and you are the same kind of a governor. I'm leaving the United States and I'm never coming back."

The feelings of the governor upon receiving this are not on record. At any rate he promptly doubled the amount of the reward. But Buck had even more promptly become an expatriate.

TWO years later he was Captain Williams, in charge of the machine guns in the so-called army of liberty commanded by General Ramon Rodriguez. The general was easily the champion challenger in all of Mexico. Periodically he would defy the world, or the commander of some other half-baked faction—and then discreetly retire into his mountain fastnesses. Thus it can be seen that the general was a strategist of the first water—the water being in his veins, mixed with alcohol.

Now Buck in his heart hated Mexicans, but with Rodriguez he at least found sanctuary, to say nothing of pay amounting to fifteen dollars a day, gold—when he could collect it.

Back in New Mexico the five thousand-dollar offer for Buck's arrest was still good. News of Buck's activities leaked back across the border, and the amount of the reward proved alluring to three brown-skinned citizens of La Verde County. They journeyed south and conferred with General Rodriguez.

The latter was willing to get rid of Buck, for he saw a chance of playing the financial game coming and going. Right off the reel he stood pat for half of the reward. Then, too, Buck had over three thousand dollars back pay due him and was getting too insistent upon it being paid in gold—and promptly. With Buck in a New Mexico jail the general would be ahead something over fifty-five hundred dollars.

But he was cautious, and refused to take an open hand in double-crossing Buck. He insisted that the three Mexicans do their own capturing of the machine-gun captain. They agreed to this, and sought to catch Buck off his guard.

Catching Buck off his guard was fatal for the Mexicans. Buck lost the skin from the knuckles of his right hand, and one of his assailants lost consciousness and two front teeth. Out came Buck's automatic and the other two Mexicans lost their lives.

Buck's reputation as a "bad *hombre*" was considerably enhanced by the result of the encounter. General Rodriguez swore fiercely at the bungling by his countrymen,

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and then proceeded to down another pint of *mescal*.

Buck was blowing his breath on his skinned knuckles as he walked over and squatted in the shady side of the general's adobe hut. He finally started to roll a corn-husk cigaret, then stopped the operation and cocked an alert ear toward the open door. The tobacco slipped unheeded from the bit of husk, for Buck's attention was more than arrested by the conversation he overheard.

To be brief, General Rodriguez was discussing a contemplated raid across the border on an American town. The general was full of *mescal*—his usual state. This condition has never been known to be helpful to successful military maneuvers, which may explain partly or in full why General Rodriguez was merely a six-spot instead of an ace in the deck of Mexican Generals. He was slipping fast and he knew it. His men were deserting to other factions whose commanders gave their men more action and greater opportunity for looting.

Therefore, reasoned General Rodriguez, it was up to him to do something spectacular, something that would make him the hero and the talk of northern Mexico and cause men to flock to his standard. The first duty of a good Mexican is to hate the United States, and Rodriguez was a good Mexican.

Just across the border, apparently, defenseless, lay the town of Tres Pecos. Tres Pecos was known as a white man's town; no Mexicans lived there, for their presence was discouraged in many ways. Rodriguez vowed to teach a lesson to the cocky inhabitants of Tres Pecos and avenge the insults that for years they had showered on any Mexicans who sought to live there.

Another reason for picking Tres Pecos was that the town bank was reputed to hold much wealth within its walls. And then again, the easy access to and easy line of retreat from the town made it a logical point of attack. And lastly—oh, thing of joy!—there were no American troops within sixty miles.

Buck overheard the plan of attack. The general would personally lead the raiding party. He would take only three hundred picked men out of the fifteen hundred remaining in his army.

This made Buck wonder if Rodriguez had lost his common sense. There were over one hundred able-bodied fighting men in Tres Pecos, and they would consider a raid by three hundred Mexicans a thing to welcome as a dinner appetizer; something to vary the monotony of life.

Buck began to smell a large-sized rat somewhere in the scheme. Presently he gathered that the general had some sort of an ace in the hole. The general's most trusted officer two days before had departed on a secret mission. Buck overheard frequent vague references to this officer as a part of the scheme of things but could gain no inkling of what he was to do.

This worried Buck for he knew that at times the Mexican can make the heathen Chinese look like an amateur when it comes to things that are dark and plans that are deep.

Buck rose abruptly and stalked into the adobe. With equal abruptness he addressed himself to Rodriguez.

"Don't be a darned fool, general!" is a liberal translation of what Buck had to say. "You'll be diggin' your own grave if you go pirootin' across the border. Take a tip from me."

The general was highly indignant at this unsolicited advice. Between the liquor within him and his quick temper he became extremely insulting. Buck's temper was equally hasty. He retorted in kind, patted his .45 automatic and cheerfully invited the general and his staff to start something. The general and staff wisely declined. Buck withdrew, the honors temporarily his.

He hastened to saddle his horse, tethered it in readiness, then went over to the supply-depot with the intention of helping himself to a machine gun and as many filled belts of cartridges as he reckoned another horse could carry. He piled the gun and the ammunition near the door and started out for a pack-horse.

In his method Buck lacked finesse. His contempt for Mexicans had grown greater with his association with the army of liberty. He was accustomed to having his own way, and usually overrode everybody in the army except the general. Therefore as he wanted a pack-horse he started to *take* it.

But the general had grown suspicious. Word of Buck's activities in the supply-hut

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came to his ears and he at once—figuratively—clamped the lid down on the *remuda*. Therefore when Buck with his usual nonchalance started to take a pack-horse for his own use he ran into considerable opposition.

The camp was alarmed. Buck failed to get the extra horse, and his scant running-start developed into a running-fight in which he failed to gain any honors at all unless a bullet through his thigh and a creased rib can be termed such.

Buck not only failed to get the machine gun out of camp; he was forced to head away from the border. Six miles to the south he reached the summit of Palomas Pass, a narrow slit between two walls of rock. Here he dismounted, left his horse in a sheltered spot and crouched down behind a rock.

The pursuing cavalry was strung out for almost a mile across the valley to the north. Those horsemen with the fleetest mounts were already in the lower reaches of the pass. Higher up, the narrowness of the path forced them to go in single file.

As the leading horseman came into sight less than fifty yards away Buck fired one shot into the air and shouted a warning. The rider pulled back fearful of facing Buck. His comrades in the rear however urged him on.

Buck shot the horse through the head. Then he emptied the automatic, inserted another clip of cartridges and rattled another flock of bullets down the cañon.

The weird shriek of flattened bullets ricocheting from the rocks on all sides of Buck's pursuers caused them to abandon all interest in the idea of a frontal attack. They beat a hasty retreat from the pass.

Buck laughed grimly as he watched the Mexicans scurry back into the valley. He could have held the pass against an army—as long as his ammunition held out—but delay was dangerous. In the course of an hour or two the soldiers would be able to find some other route over the cliffs, and close in from the rear.

They did cross to the other side. Two brave *soldados* crept stealthily up the pass with the laudable intention of potting Buck from behind. But Buck was not among those present. At that moment he was exactly ten miles away and still going strong, heading by-a roundabout trail for the border.

AT TEN minutes past three that afternoon he pulled up his tired horse before the schoolhouse on the outskirts of Tres Pecos. What caught his eye was the water-tank on the roof of the building. A pipe led down the wall to a drinking-fountain. Buck dismounted and led his horse into the yard. He walked with a painful limp. His trouser-leg, sock and boot were stiff with dried blood. A heroic bandage however had stopped the bleeding.

As Buck entered he heard the voice of the schoolmistress speaking to the pupils. He paid no heed. The only thing of interest to him right then was water and lots of it. This was the first water he had seen in fifteen miles of hot and dusty travel. presently, his thirst satisfied, he straightened up from the fountain and allowed his horse to thrust its nose eagerly to the bottom of the shallow bowl.

Within the school, during the last half-hour of the day's session, recitations were the order. A girl was reciting something about waves of the ocean rolling on forever. Buck was watching the road in front. From the direction of town a horseman was approaching in haste. Hoof-beats thundered on the arroyo bridge a hundred yards from the school. A few seconds later, horse and rider flashed by. Buck recognized the man. He was a Mexican, one of Rodriguez's officers.

"Now what in the pie-eyed name of tricks has that bird been up to?" wondered Buck.

He jerked at the bridle to stop his horse from drinking too much in its overheated condition. His cogitation about the horseman was broken off as a schoolboy started to recite. Clear and distinct the voice came through the open windows:

> "Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself has said:
> 'This is my own, my native land!'
> Whose heart has ne'er within him burned
> As home his footsteps he had turned
> From wandering on a foreign strand—"

The lad continued the lines. Buck tarried to listen.

"By golly!" he muttered, half resentfully, "here's one *hombre* whose *heart* ain't burnin' none. It's my *leg* that hurts!"

There was no intentional humor in this. Buck was far from being in a humorous mood. Though he affected indifference, varied emotions swelled suddenly in his

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breast, and there came over him an overwhelming sense of loneliness as he realized that he had no country. The thin-pitched voice of the schoolboy was rasping old wounds.

Two years before, Buck had sworn never to return to American soil. The raw deal in the New Mexican court had sent him away with a load of bitterness in his heart; a sense of injustice and helplessness against the scheme of things that made him feel baffled, cheated. And now he *had* returned, his status still that of an outlaw, to be hunted like a mad dog, with a large reward to incite the hunters. In his bitter state of mind, however, there was no tinge of self-pity. Buck was too game for that.

The schoolboy recited the final lines:

> "— And doubly dying shall go down
> To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
> Unwept, unhonored and unsung."

For a moment Buck stared up at the open windows. Then a faint suspicion of a grin stole into his face.

"'Unwept, unhonored and unsung!" he repeated. "By golly! that's just the way I *went* to Mexico."

His gaze wandered absently across the road and out over the desert. It centered on an enormous growth of cacti, a weird, grotesque formation that from a distance reminded Buck of a gallows.

"Only it oughta be *unhung* instead of unsung. Oh, well— Maybe I'm a blamed soft-hearted fool to risk comin' back. But,—what could a man do? I just *had* to come!"

Favoring his wounded leg the best he could, he clambered wearily into the saddle and rode out of the school yard. His thoughts again centered briefly, wonderingly, on the Mexican officer who was traveling south in such a hurry. Buck came to the road and looked toward the border. The officer was a mile away.

Buck swung his horse toward Tres Pecos. The three-inch layer of dust that did duty as a road ran straight north into the town. A hundred yards from the school the road crossed a short bridge over a dry arroyo. On the far side of the wooden bridge lay two large corrals, one on each side of the road. These were used for temporarily quarantining stock brought across the border. The road ran between the high, stout walls of the corrals.

Beyond the corrals lay the main business street of the town, a wide, dusty, full-of-chuck-holes thoroughfare about five hundred feet in length. At the southern end of the street, opposite each other, stood two livery stables. The corral walls ran right up to the corners of these buildings. After crossing the bridge a traveler was forced to go straight ahead into the business street, both sides of which were lined solidly with store buildings.

"What in Sam Hill?" muttered Buck, as he rode down the street.

Not a store was open for business. Every door was locked. The ground floor windows were either guarded by iron bars or else had iron shutters over them. The shutters were closed and locked. Not a person was in sight. *Even the saloons were closed!* Which caused Buck to wonder what plague, what sudden calamity had stricken the town.

Buck rode on to the head of the street. Before him lay the plaza, a large square block containing nothing except an area of heat-reflecting adobe dust, with a huge, dry iron fountain in the center. Around all four sides of the square ran an iron railing. Buck absently removed his hat and scratched his head as he noted that not a horse was hitched to the plaza railing. Not even a flivver was parked around the square. A few dogs asleep in shady spots and a woman with two children disappearing up a side-street were the only living things in sight.

"Good Godfrey! What's hit the town?" Buck asked himself.

He could find no answer. A sudden chill, a premonition of disaster, caused him to break into cold perspiration. Hastily he rode around the square to the office of the town-marshal.

AT THE sound of hoofs plodding down the street, Marshal Bronson came yawning on to the veranda. Bronson was one of the regular old-timers of New Mexico. The most noticeable thing about him was his drooping "walrus tusk" mustache. Three-score years showed easily in a face that was heavily lined and seamed. Long journeys across heat-stricken wastes had burned his face to a permanent brick-red, and half-closed the lids of his cold blue eyes in a habitual squint.

The years had not affected his body to

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any great extent. He still stood as erect and was capable of almost as much endurance as in the days when he was the justly famed sheriff of La Verde County. Mexican plurality at the polls had ousted him at last and he had settled down in Tres Pecos to spend his remaining years in maintaining order in "a white man's town."

Bronson's yawn ended abruptly as he recognized Buck. Up went his hands in prompt compliance with the unspoken command intimated by Buck's automatic.

"Aw, put 'em down. Don't be so blamed formal!" said Buck. "I'm just playin' safe. D'yuh think I came back into this greaser-run part of the country without a —— of a good reason? Not me! *Rodriguez is gonna raid the town!* He's comin' just after sundown."

Bronson slowly lowered his hands. Eying Buck closely he started rubbing his left thumb alongside his chin. Doubt and sincere regret were in his voice as he spoke.

"So *you've* started smokin' *marihuana*. Too bad, Buck. I thought you'd have better sense."

"You go to blazes! Look at my leg—and I've got another little token of regard on my rib. D'yuh think I got 'em at a pink tea?" Sarcasm, disgust and irritation lay heavy in Buck's tone.

"Well, no-o, Buck—not exactly," conceded the marshal, grinning at Buck's petulant display of outraged feelings.

"You're darned tootin' I didn't! Rodriguez is so full of *mescal* that he's got the idea the only way to make himself the pride of Mexico is to wipe Tres Pecos off the map—see!"

Bronson admitted that he saw

"Say!" continued Buck. "What's hit the town? Where's all the men?"

"Gold-rush," explained the marshal. "Last night, a greaser blew into town with ore samples so rich that they set the town afire. Some of our prominent citizens spent the night getting the Mex' drunk. Early this morning, they got him feeling so good that he offered to show where he'd made the strike. Wow! The town went loco. Every able-bodied man joined the exodus. They went in Fords and trucks and autos, on hosses and mules and burros—any way to get there and stake out claims. At noon I could still see their dust."

Bronson pointed to the westward, toward the San Madro Mountains looming blue and purple on the horizon.

"A greaser!" Buck grew thoughtful. "Say, was he squinty?"

"As cock-eyed as a drunk pig."

"And one ear lookin' like it was half chewed-off?"

"That's the *hombre!* How'd you know?"

"I know you're sold higher'n a kite!"

Buck spat his disgust as he suddenly realized that Rodriguez had really had an ace in the hole.

"That cock-eyed greaser is Colonel Olivero—Rodriguez's right hand man. You say he hated to show where he found the gold. Yeh, he hated leading your citizens out on a wild-goose chase. He hated it like a pup hates liver. He's made it soft pickings for Rodriguez, that's what. Leave it to a greaser to put over some long-winded scheme, and put it over right. How many of you were immune to the gold-fever?"

"Only the bank president and me."

"Huh! Fat chance we'll have!"

"There's some school-kids that can shoot circles around the average Mexican."

"Leave the kids out of it!" snapped Buck. "This is gonna be a man's job. You get busy and telephone to Serenada for the troops to hot-foot it down here."

"The line's been dead all afternoon."

"The wires cut, huh! Rodriguez is sure takin' no chances a-tall."

"How many raiders are coming?" inquired Bronson.

"Three hundred picked men. I don't have to furnish a diagram. You know what *picked* means. Rodriguez has it all doped out to loot the bank and all the stores, kill everybody in sight—kids and all—dynamite the buildings and set fire to the ruins. I heard him braggin' that he'd plumb wipe out the town. And we're wastin' too much time chinnin' here."

Buck cocked an eye at the sun.

"We've only got a couple of hours or so. Got any dynamite? The three of us will have a chance if we can blow that bunch of picked butchers sky-high."

"Not a stick left in town," replied the marshal. "They took every bit of it along on the gold-rush. But, say, Buck, I've got a machine gun. It was confiscated by the Federal officers from a guy who tried to run it across the border, and they left the gun temporarily in my charge."

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"What!" yelled Buck. "Glory be! Lead me to it."

Two minutes later Buck realized that all custard has a bug in it; the bug in this particular case being that there was but one belt of ammunition—two hundred and fifty rounds. Hasty examination of the gun—a Vickers—had shown it to be in perfect working order.

Buck began to figure how to make one belt of shells do the work of several. He returned to the veranda; his gaze centered speculatively on the dry fountain-bowl in the center of the plaza.

Pop! Pop! Pop! A succession of staccato reports sounded from the main street leading into the town from the south; and for a moment Buck had a real scare. He thought the raiders had come. Suddenly in a swirl of dust a motor-cycle swung out of the street and started around the plaza.

"School's out," explained Bronson. "Here comes my kid."

"Does he ride that way all the time?"

"That's Danny's usual gait."

"Then he won't live long or die a natural death," prophesied Buck.

"He'll live longer than the machine," returned the marshal. "I paid fifteen dollars for it—fifteenth-hand, and how Danny keeps it running is beyond me. No one else could."

By this time Danny had circled the plaza, his path marked by a heavy and still rising cloud of dust. He slithered the machine to a stop in front of the veranda. Danny looked questioningly at Buck, then his face cracked into a grin. Buck likewise grinned; he couldn't help it, for Danny's grin was catching.

DANNY BRONSON was fourteen years of age. He possessed innumerable freckles, a slightly turned-up nose, snappy brown eyes, and a positive genius for keeping his ramshackle motor-cycle in running order.

"How quickly can you make it to Serenada?" inquired Buck.

"Two hours, easy," was the prompt reply. "Why?"

"You'll have to sprout wings to do it in that time over those roads," returned Buck. "But you break the record, and tell the soldiers that Tres Pecos is gonna be raided by the greasers after sundown. Savvy? Say that the telephone wires have been cut."

Excitement gleamed momentarily in Danny's eyes. But shucks! This was too good to be true. He glanced at his father inquiringly.

"That's right, son. Burn the roads to Serenada, and if you burn out that fool machine doing it I'll buy you a new one."

"Dog-gone it!" swore Danny. "These tires ain't *too* good. I' been wanting you to get me new ones. But watch my dust."

"Wait a minute," called Bronson. "Don't get too excited, son. Got enough gas?"

"Full tank," chirped Danny. "So long!" Laboriously he pushed the machine forward a few paces until its motor broke out into startling back-fires. Another moment, and he leaped astride the seat. Pop, pop, pop! And Danny was leading a private dust-cloud toward Serenada.

"Now," said Buck, "we'll set the Vickers up in the fountain. I'll let the greasers come right up to the head of the street and then I'll spray the daylight out of them—as long as the shells hold out."

"How about setting fire to the arroyo bridge?" suggested Bronson.

Buck sat all over the idea. "They'll manage to cross the arroyo above and below the town," he explained. "They'd come in from all sides, and we wouldn't have a thin whisper of a chance."

"I reckon you're dead right. They'll cross the bridge, if we leave it for them, and then they have to come right up the main street."

A little later, a group of children, each vying to be nearest the school-teacher, came out of the main street. Buck swung onto his horse and galloped around the square to meet them. Bronson hastened over to the bank.

Buck reined up before the group of children who were chatting with the teacher. He noted that most of them were girls; then on glancing down the main street, caught sight of most of the boys skylarking down on the corral fences.

He spoke to the girls briefly and to the point. He said that Marshal Bronson had given orders for every one in town to be at the plaza within twenty minutes. The girls scuttled away to their homes with the news. Buck galloped down the street and ordered the boys to spread the news of the raid, and to gather everybody at the plaza.

Buck then returned to the plaza just as

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Bronson appeared with Underwood, the bank president. The latter was—well, he can best be described by telling that he wore spats. In Tres Pecos, mind you.

Buck, after introductions, looked Underwood up and down. He gazed almost fascinated at the spats. Right then and there however Underwood's potentialities as a fighting-man faded to a figure less than zero in Buck's estimation.

Nellie Robertson, the school-teacher, hastened over to the men. She was easily the belle of Tres Pecos. She would have been the belle almost anywhere, which is a sufficient hint of her charms. More difficult to describe would be her courage. In a matter-of-fact way she addressed Buck.

"I thank you for trying not to scare the little girls, but the boys told me about the raid. Will there be much danger?"

"Ma'm," replied Buck, belatedly removing his hat, "take it from me there's gonna be a lot of danger layin' around in big chunks. That's why I'm gonna send all the women and kids out of town. You and Mr. Underwood will take charge of that end of it. He will take the very old women and babies in his car. You'll hike east *pronto* with the kids for Serenada. And keep on going 'till you git there. In the meantime, as I said, this town's gonna be plumb full of danger and I'm gonna make as much of it as I can for the raiders. The first inning will be mine. After that; well, I hope that even if Danny Bronson doesn't make his trick motor-bike hold together as far as Serenada, you'll arrive—in time.

Underwood questioned Buck, then, obviously relieved that he would not be forced to take a hand in the fighting, hastened away to get his automobile.

Miss Robertson lingered.

"Is—is there any other way I can help?" she inquired.

"Yes," snapped Buck, irritated, "by hurryin' along the gettin'-out-of-town job so's I won't be worryin' about that."

She hurried away, her cheeks flaming at Buck's crisp tone, and vowing to herself that Buck was indeed a very rude and crude person.

"Can we open the hardware store?" Buck turned to the marshal.

"Sure. Parrish left the keys with me."

"Let's get started. I want to get every shotgun in the place loaded up with buckshot. I'll pile 'em in the fountain, and cut loose with them after I've run the belt through the Vickers."

"Where do I come in?" asked Bronson.

"Ah!" grinned Buck. "That's what Rodriguez will find out. I'm beginning to get a plan, and it calls for barbed-wire."

Bronson hastened to open the hardware store. Almost directly in the entrance, in a position to tear the garments of the unwary, but where they could be seen by ranchers entering the store, stood three reels of barbed-wire mounted for convenience on a wheeled framework.

"Made to order," commented Buck. "I'll wheel 'em out, while you rustle up a couple of hammers, some wire-nippers and a few pounds of staples. We'll string wire across the head of the street until a cat can't wriggle through."

For two hours they wired like men possessed, and the result of their hasty labor promised complications for General Rodriguez. For a distance of thirty feet from the corner, the main street had been strung from side to side by a series of strands of wire about a foot from the ground. The wires were stretched from sidewalk to sidewalk, and each wire was firmly secured to the sidewalk planks by seven or eight staples at each end. These wires were to trip up the galloping horses of the raiders and throw the entire force into confusion.

Ten feet from the corner a fence of loose strands rose to a height of six feet, securely stapled to the wooden walls of the buildings on either side. But what might be termed the "*pièce de résistance*" was a fairly taut forbidding barrier eight feet high, from the corner of one building to the corner of the other. Altogether it was as mean a trap as could be built in such a short time,

"Now for the guns," said Buck, mopping his brow.

They worked feverishly, and in the meantime Buck thought up a few more additions to his plan of defense. One of these had to do with Bronson's flivver. This was in a garage, with a broken driving-shaft.

Buck rode into the garage with his horse, tied a rope to the front axle of the little car, snubbed the other end of the rope around his saddle-horn and towed the machine out into the plaza.

The sun dropped below the distant tops of the San Madros. Twilight crept rapidly over the town. Buck made the final preparations in entrenching himself in the plaza

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fountain, the cast-iron bowl of which was ten feet in diameter and three in depth.

Bronson had made a hasty trip to the roof of Underwood's bank, and from that elevated position had seen an enormous cloud of dust in the lower reaches of the Piedras Blancas a few miles below the border.

A cloud of that size could be caused only by the hoofs of several hundred animals—horses or cattle. Bronson knew they were horses. The raiders were coming. He scurried back to report to Buck.

"In about half-an-hour or so, I make it," he said,

"Well," replied Buck cheerfully, "it'll be dark then, and they'll ride blind into the trip-wires."

As the two men settled down to wait, they talked. Said Bronson—

"Buck, you wanted dynamite. How could you use it?"

"A dozen ways. Since I've been away from this country I've seen a lot of things I'd like to forget. I'd like to use a little of my knowledge on these butchers who are coming with the expectation of looting and slaughtering without opposition. I'd like to plant a box of dynamite every dozen yards down the whole street."

"How would you set it off at the right time?"

"Easy! I'd fix a cocked pistol in every box—with a wire fastened to each trigger. I'd fasten each of these wires to a cross-wire, and when the leg of a horse struck a cross-wire—good night!"

"I see. Simple and effective," drawled Bronson.

"And darned messy!" added Buck. "I rode along with Rodriguez into Casa Hermosa the night he had the grand idea of taking the town from the Feds by a surprize cavalry dash. The Feds had the roads mined good and plenty—and that's just the way *we* got it. My horse got killed by one blast, and I was blamed lucky not to get more than half killed.

"And, say, if *we* had dynamite this raid would be over before it starts. I'd fix up a lot of half sticks with short fuses. Then I'd have a lighted candle down behind the parapet of the roof of Haley's saloon. Light 'em and throw—that's all there would be to it. These greasers are dynamite shy, and I don't blame 'em, at that."

JUST before sundown, Serenada as usual was going along in its peaceful way. Then Danny Bronson arrived, with his old motor-cycle ready to gasp its last. He had ridden the last fifteen miles on one cylinder and the remnants of a flat tire. Danny threw a figurative bomb into the quietness of the town. The news of the raid spread like a fog in a breeze. The town seethed speculation of what had happened, what would happen, what might happen.

Almost immediately after Danny reached the commandant of the post, three army-trucks, loaded with part of a machine-gun company and their equipment were dispatched toward Tres Pecos. Not satisfied with this however the commandant sent out a requisition for fast touring-cars. Ten large machines were at once forthcoming from the citizens of Serenada. Six, eight and even ten doughboys piled into each car, and this second relief-expedition sped away to the westward.

Five miles out of town it overtook and passed the lumbering army-trucks. The automobiles roared away through the darkness over the none-too-good New Mexico roads, making fast time until on the narrow road leading down from Santa Susanna Mesa the driver of the leading car made a miscalculation on a sharp curve—a thing easily done in the deceptive glare of headlights on a strange road.

The auto smashed into the embankment; the engine went dead. Five soldiers in the car were more or less shaken up and bruised by the sudden stop, but they cursed as loudly as the rest at the fact that the wrecked machine completely blocked the narrow road. Temporarily at least, perhaps for all-night, the relief-party was held up.

The soldiers gave vent to their emotions in various ways as they pictured what might be taking place in the threatened border-town. Some one suggested dumping the crippled machine over the grade into the cañon depths in order to clear the road. Willing hands laid hold, but their work was cut out for them.

One front wheel of the heavy car was completely dished, that is, all of the spokes were broken. The hub of the wheel lay in the dirt-road. To make it worse, the front axle skidded over the top of a low but firmly embedded boulder, jamming the front of

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the car almost immovably against the bank.

"Jack her up!" was a suggestion. "We'll force her out."

They set to work.

MEANWHILE in Tres Pecos, Buck Williams crouched in readiness behind his machine gun, his teeth chattering from sheer nervousness. The uncertainty of waiting was fast eating away Buck's failing supply of nervous energy; the raiders for some reason were delaying their entrance into the town. Buck had slept but little the night before. And during that day he had lost much blood from his wounds. Nor had he partaken of food. In the tense excitement of anticipating and preparing for the raid he had forgotten all about the necessity of nourishment.

On one side of the machine gun which projected over the iron rim of the fountain-bowl were piled fifteen shotguns, consisting of seven double-barreled pieces, three pumps and five automatics. To distract his thoughts Buck began to figure the possibilities of these weapons. All of them were loaded—fifty-seven shells in all, and each shell contained nine buckshot.

For a time he wrestled with mental arithmetic, endeavoring to discover the sum total of fifty-seven multiplied by nine. All this in an abstracted sort of way. His real attention was centered on the street leading into town. So far, on the buckshot problem, he had computed eleven different answers. He doubted that any of them were correct—not that it made any difference.

Suddenly he gathered himself together, tensely. The gentle night breeze had veered around to the south. On its wings came a confused sound, the drum of hoofs, the clatter, rattle and creak of cavalry equipment.

For perhaps the tenth time in ten minutes Buck leaned over the machine gun and felt around in the darkness to assure himself all over again that things were as he wanted them. He prided himself on his knowledge of a Vickers and he was about to put that knowledge to a supreme test by handling the gun alone. He knew the waywardness of machine guns at times. Suppose that it should jam——

"Darned fool!" he muttered nervously at himself. "Quit thinkin' of what *might* happen."

A sudden thunder of hoofs as the van of the raiders reached the planks of the arroyo bridge.

"All set, Bronson?" Buck called out.

"All set!" came the reply out of the darkness in front of Buck and a little to the right.

"Wait till I yell again. Then get her goin', and make yourself scarce. Hit the breeze to the corrals."

"Keep your shirt on, Buck! I'll hold up my end of it."

In a few moments Buck heard the horsemen enter the lower end of the wide business street. He knew their plans. They would come riding six abreast up to the plaza, where the columns were to split and gallop pell-mell around both sides of the square and through the streets, every man shooting and yelling to terrify the women and children and drive them into their homes.

This done, the raiders were to get down to the real business of looting and killing. A special detail of twenty had been told off to hunt down the town-marshal. He was to be shot on sight. One hundred men were detailed to enter and search the houses. The women beautiful enough to be worth while were to be carried back across the border. Those lacking beauty were to be shot immediately and the houses set afire over their bodies.

Rodriguez himself was in command of the men who were to dynamite the bank and loot the vaults. There would be no serious opposition; of that Rodriguez had been assured by his spy who had remained around Tres Pecos until after three o'clock. Rodriguez was unaware of Buck's arrival in town. The spy had assured him that Buck had not come across the border for he had not seen the machine-gun captain anywhere on the road.

Buck's thirsty trip into the school yard had served to prevent his being seen and reported to Rodriguez. The latter might have made some changes in his plan for a direct entry into the town had he known of Buck's presence, for he had a wholesome respect for Buck's resourcefulness and fighting qualities.

Buck, crouching behind the Vickers, his hands on the grips, his thumbs ready for firing, fairly itched to cut loose with the weapon as he thought of Rodriguez's paln

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of cold-blooded murder and enslavement of the women of Tres Pecos.

The clatter of hoofs began again, halfway toward the plaza. The columns had stopped to reorganize. Now they were gathering speed for the spectacular dash through the town. Nearer and nearer, then—the leading horses struck the tripwires concealed in the darkness. Their riders were spilled from the saddles as the horses went down.

"Crank her!" yelled Buck.

The engine of Bronson's flivver suddenly roared into life. Its headlights suddenly illumined the head of the street, revealing the entanglements and the struggling mass behind them. The faster the engine of a flivver turns over, the brighter the headlights. Bronson hastily adjusted the hand-throttle to racing speed then turned and ran toward a side-street.

Momentarily Buck was almost appalled at the scene revealed by the headlights. For a moment he feared that sheer weight and momentum would serve to tear away the barbed wire. Before those in the middle of the columns knew that anything was wrong and could pull up their horses they were in the midst of a tangled mass of squealing terrified animals and cursing men.

At least forty horses were down or were struggling to their feet the best they could in the press that weighed upon them. A score of Mexicans were already *hors de combat,* injured or killed in the "niggerpile" of fallen horses. One rider, astride a plunging, terrified horse cut loose at the headlights of the flivver with a Luger.

The reports and flashes of this weapon caused Buck's nervousness to drop from him. A slight movement of his thumbs, and the machine gun burst into staccato song for about one second. A burst of eight or ten shots. Tapping the gun slightly to one side he cut loose with another burst.

It was cold deliberate slaughter—but what would you——? It had to be done. Buck nursed the belt of cartridges through the Vickers, short burst after short burst, stream after stream of machine-gun bullets at a fifty-yard range into the demoralized, penned-in raiders.

Then suddenly the whole street seemed to burst into a gigantic sheet of flame. A brief flash of horses and men being hurled in all directions. At least six horses and as many men struck the wall of the building at the right-hand corner. The wall caved in, the building collapsed. And simultaneously with this momentary phantasmagorial flash:

Booo—ooom! Two heavy explosions, separate, but blending together as one, rocked the town. Buck was thrown backward by the concussion. For a moment he lay half dazed, then sat up and shook his head in an effort to stop the ringing in his ears.

For a short space his mind was a blank—— what had occurred? Then came sudden realization as he sniffed the fumes of burned nitro-glycerine. Two of Rodriguez's men had been carrying dynamite into the town. A bullet from the Vickers had struck a bundle of explosive. The other bundle had fired almost simultaneously from the shock of the first explosion.

Following the blast there was a momentary death-like silence, broken only by the tinkle and crash of falling glass throughout the town. Then the shrill scream of a wounded horse. Buck placed his hands on the fountain's rim and stared almost unbelievingly at the devastation caused by the explosion. The building to the right had vanished; the opposite corner building was completely wrecked. The barbed-wire had disappeared.

The flivver, thirty yards from the explosion, was apparently uninjured. Its headlights still illumined the street. Buck saw Mexicans scattering, bunching, scattering again as though not knowing which way to turn. The fight had been taken out of them. Their one desire was to get back across into Chihuahua. The survivors headed in that direction, some on wild-eyed, almost unmanageable horses, some afoot, staggering, some crawling pathetically on all fours.

Then from the corrals, about three hundred yards from Buck's position in the fountain, came the unmistakable boom of a shotgun. Followed four more shots in rapid succession. Bronson had emptied an automatic shotgun. Came five more shots, a moment of silence, then Bronson's voice calling out a warning in Spanish.

The explosion-shocked, scared remnant of the raider-band heeded the warning; that is, most of them did. Those who didn't were stopped by the fifty-four buckshot that a Winchester pumpgun is capable of emptying in a short space of time.

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The raiders retired down the street toward the plaza. Most of them stopped in front of the Bearcat Saloon, in meek compliance with Bronson's order. The others who rushed on toward the plaza were out of luck. Buck cut loose with a couple of shotguns.

Shotguns at both ends of the street. Caramba! These cursed gringoes did not give a raider a fair chance.

ANY one rash enough to have called Buck Williams a psychologist would have been termed a liar or felt the weight of Buck's fist. Buck took no chances with strange words that might conceal an insult. But Buck, unknown to himself, *was* a psychologist. From much contact with the Mexican mind he knew that it was exceedingly impressionable. Therefore, he was a firm believer in frightfulness.

For generations the peons have cherished a fixed belief to the effect that, if it were not for Texas, Mexico could lick the spots off the United States in any kind of a fight. Thus witnessing how the Tehanoes, Texicans or Texans of the early days had made their reputation live for eighty-odd years in the Mexican mind.

Buck figured that the memory of this Tres Pecos disaster would dwell fresh south of the border for at least an equal period. And to make it the more poignant, a mere pair of despised gringoes had sufficed to wipe out or capture the picked three hundred men of a Mexican army. New Mexico and its sister border-states in the future need have no more fear of raids.

For the next two hours Buck and the marshal continued to shotgun-herd the Mexicans between them. Then far out on the desert to the eastward appeared a blaze of lights. Shortly afterward nine touring-cars laden with soldiers, raced into town. The tenth car had been dumped over the cañon edge to clear the road. Attracted by the lights of Bronson's flivver, the machines of the rescue-party pulled up along the plaza. Buck climbed out of the fountain and limped wearily over to meet the soldiers. His words were brief.

"There they are. Take 'em! I don't want 'em!" Buck pointed down the street. With that he turned abruptly and disappeared in the darkness of the plaza.

Ten minutes later he stealthily opened a corral gate and headed south over the arroyo bridge. Buck had no hopes, no illusions, and no faith in the gratitude of the people of his native State. He was sneaking back into Mexico.

As he crossed the bridge he was "grabbing leather." Dizzily he swayed in the saddle. He had overplayed his hand when it came to living on nerve alone. The inevitable reaction had come. Loss of blood and no food—his body was taking toll. He crossed the bridge safely enough, then suddenly the world went black. As he slid out of the saddle his feet, fortunately, slipped clear of the stirrups. A limp, unconscious figure, he landed in the dirt at the edge of the road.

Two days later he regained consciousness and a lucid state of mind to discover himself in Bronson's bed. Beside him, showing obvious traces of lack of sleep, sat the schoolteacher. She began to doze, her chin on her breast, as Buck lay watching. Then two men entered the room, Bronson and a stranger. With a start, Miss Robertson awoke.

The stranger came to the side of the bed. For a moment he gazed at Buck, then seeing the latter's eyes open, spoke.

"I'm the governor of the State. We owe a debt to you, Mr. Williams, a debt of gratitude—and reparation. I have signed your pardon."

Buck blinked twice, then his spirit flared.

"To —— with your pardon. All I want is half-an-hour's head start—if you mean that gratitude stuff."

"Oh, governor, I'm afraid he's delirious again. He's had a fever." There was a curious catch in Miss Robertson's voice.

"Delirious, your eye!" snorted Buck. "Just lemme get out of here, that's all."

"I'm afraid you misunderstand," continued the governor. "A five thousand dollar reward was offered for your apprehension, for you were suspected, er—rather strongly, of being guilty of a certain murder. Mr. Cassidy—my old friend, Slivers—has been trying for two years to convince me that your conviction was a put-up job. Last week he met a certain Mexican, and, to put it plainly, choked the truth out of him. He brought the Mexican to me and made the man repeat the story. Cassidy's way of handling him was rough but effective. Therefore a clean slate for you."

"That's different!" Buck sighed in relief. "Now get the —— out of here. I'm tired and want to sleep. Wake me up at ten o'clock next week."

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RUM ISLAND

by Kenneth Howell

Author of "Rule of the Sea."

PEOPLE used to point them out in the more respectable waterfront bars of the Port of New York. It was done quietly even slyly, behind their backs, always without malice, for both men were well liked, but with amusement colored now and then with just a measure of pity.

"Don't stare, but take a look at those two men; no, down toward the other end of the bar. They stole a ship—fact—but of course unproved—in this day of closely controlled seas, nineteen hundred and twelve—no South Seas business either—it happened off the coast of Brazil—it is said they got nothing out of it. The big husky fellow is Captain Wing, Captain Buck Wing. The other is his mate, Tom Crawford—one of those blind unbreakable friendships."

THE colored cook was singing "Midnight in Hell," moaning out the chorus and the interminable verses, rocking back and forth as he steadily peeled potatoes. From the galley door, through a little passageway, he looked out on the black, vague, motionless sea. The ship was a part of the sea, as black, as vague, as motionless. The cook was unconscious of it, but the gloom of the night sea had brought out "Midnight in Hell" rather than any of the rest of the songs he knew, songs of sport and life and the futility of both.

For twenty-five years Flood had been a clean dressed, clean cooking sea-cook, and for twenty-five years he had saved his pay, and so in his fifty-first year, he had in a small brass-bound teakwood box a library which represented $20,000—wealth—independence. He was favorably known to half a dozen captains and in a vague, less intimate way, to a hundred and thirty bank-tellers, for north, south, east and west spread through the seaports of the world, he had savings accounts in the local banks, and in the teakwood box were the bank-books, that with their multicolored bindings formed his library.

"When the day comes that I can box the compass with my bank-books, then I quits the sea."

That all sea-cooks are crazy in some degree is unquestionably true, a matter of experience. The worst of them run amuck with cleavers, others hurt only themselves, but the craziness of Flood was mildly proved by his library, in the manner of his saving in one hundred and thirty banks, but perhaps, considered from the old idea of not putting all of one's eggs in one basket, his eccentricity shaded into shrewdness.

On this dark night as the cook sang his melancholy song of damnation came young Tom Crawford, mate of the small yawl-rigged cargo boat, *Daphne*, port of registry, Havana, port of call, Buenos Aires, laden with half-barrels of rum on the southern run, returning north with grain. It had been her run for six years and she was profitable to the owners, who operated her on a basis not unusual in tropical waters, for the ship's company numbered but four, captain, mate, cook and boy. A bonus to each man paid him for his extra work and the yawl rig made the ship easy to handle in fair weather, and possible in heavy weather.

Crawford sat down by the cook, reached

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for a knife from a locker and began to peel potatoes. It was finesse.

"Chef, the Old Man and I have been talking of the emptiness of sea-life, its drifting tendency, you know, just thinking aloud."

The cook nodded his complete understanding and the mate went on.

"He and I have been together now, going on ten years, and tonight neither of us could tell why we were at sea or what we were doing anyhow in this old world. It's a queer life. Now you've been at sea all your life; what's your base, what is your interest, what is your plan of things?"

"The salvation of my soul, sir," said the cook soberly.

"Um," said the mate, taken aback for a moment, "but I mean concerning this world, a force in every-day life."

"Religion," said the cook.

"——!" said the mate and went aft, raging to the captain. Finesse and diplomacy had ceased to dwell in him.

"Buck, I told you that Psalm-singing dinge was the reef. And he has us high and dry. Here you and I, months ago, in cold blood, decided to turn crooked. We moralized—university men—from good families—turning pirates——"

"Thieves," interrupted the captain.

"Pirates," insisted the mate. "It all came from our not going into business when we graduated, but oh no, we had to have a bit of a fling, and imagine *that* Buck, we had to have this fling after four years of flinging at "Doc Topley's" and the "Nass." Life at Princeton was too quiet so what did we do?"

"We went to sea my son," said Wing, "and it was ten years more of college life but considerably more diversified and instead of being broke in the middle of each term, we are now broke at the beginning of each voyage. But that's all over and gone by, now get this, Psalm-singer or not, the cook is going to come in. We don't want him but we can't get along without him. The *Daphne* will not reach port. You leave Flood to me."

The mate took the wheel and Wing went forward to the tiny galley. There was a sort of vagueness, of unreality, of sketchiness in the lives of the two men. Of the two, Wing had taken on more of the professional color of the sea. He was big and self-contained and had shed his illusions and most of his ideals. He had found the sea, as it is, hard, stern, dangerous; and so he had become.

Between him and the younger, impulsive, reckless Crawford had slowly matured a friendship that lasted; neither ever dreamed that it could break up. It was just a part of their life, that they should together stay in the business of sailing round the world carrying trade. In the technique of their calling, both were as faultless as the sea demands its successful venturers shall be.

Crawford could have taken out his master's certificate almost at any time but he would not leave his partner. They shared their pay equally, their work, their play, their plans for quitting the sea, and their folly in not leaving it. Both hated it, feared it and loved it.

So sailors are, in forecastle or on the bridge. Their words show hate for the sea, their actions show fear of it, but in their hearts is love, a love more unselfish probably than that of men for any other calling, for the sea has little to give except toil and hardship and danger, but that little outweighs the rest, for that little, that much, is the lure of ever-changing horizons and cities and countries. It is as near sheer space as man can come, and so it calls and takes and destroys.

The boy came aft to take the wheel for his watch, and the mate went below and set the little table in the saloon with glasses and a decanter of Bacardi, and sat down to wait for the captain. But he could not sit still, and Wing found him pacing nervously up and down the cabin. He answered Crawford's anxious look.

"It's all right Tom, nothing to it—came high—twelve hundred dollars—but it's worth it. As for the boy you are worrying about, forget him. I chose him because he was a mute, and he has added to that by proving dull. He isn't in the problem at all. Go easy on the bottle, man, we'll need everything we have in a week, strength, head and nerve."

BUT Crawford drank heavily that night and kept it up and two days later the skipper joined in and the yawl was silent no longer in the star-lighted nights crossing the equator, for mighty choruses roared out of the open saloon ports, songs of the sea, and of the homes that neither man could hope for, and of love.

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Forward in the galley too there was song as Flood did his work and his songs were hymns from an old tattered hymnal that he had won at dice from a jailer in Martinique. Aft at the wheel the deaf-mute steered calmly on, interested only in the hope of his return to his Argentine settlement on the River Plate when he had saved enough money to buy a few cattle and a horse and perhaps take a wife. He steered on, under the faint southern cross, and the dim binnacle light was reflected on his dusky face. Yes, he would surely take a wife.

It was the cook who reported the island that lay a scant six miles off the port bow of the *Daphne*. It was just a sand-spit far out of trade routes described on the chart as Lizard Reef, with the inevitable opening through the outer barrier into a small lagoon. Half a mile off, the captain put the yawl about and with a fair brisk wind at his back, headed straight for the narrow green hole in the line of white breakers, but the week's drinking suddenly struck him and he yelled to the mate:

"Take the wheel; I can't see the —— channel."

It was the mate who squinted through blurred eyes and brought the *Daphne* to her anchorage and as the anchor ran out, wiped the sweat from his face and grinned at Wing.

"Couldn't see the passage, eh? Well, 'tween you and me and Captain Kidd I couldn't even see the island."

There was no more drinking. For six days the men dug a trench on the beach, just beyond the high tide line, written in dried seaweed. Wing seemed superhuman, even to Crawford who knew him so well, who had known him in sport, in battle, in work.

"My word Buck," he said one night as they lay resting on the beach. "If we don't get a blamed dollar out of this crazy job your condition will be your pay. Man you ought to see yourself."

Stripped to dungaree trousers and thin cotton undershirt, Wing was impressive and both men laughed as the mate recalled the days of foot-ball training. Wing had been counted a strong aggressive player, but never had any coach or trainer put him into his present condition. He was neither beefy nor rangy but he had that look of sheer health and strength that the sea gives to its workers.

He was built like a professional wrestler, with a wicked sling to his shoulders and squarely placed on a seventeen-inch neck was a small well-shaped head, and his face was young with clear blue eyes and his hair blond with the peculiar blondness of a Dane. On the beach under a brilliant moon the sea partners rested, smoking and occasionally talking in the lazy, healthy way that twelve hours of hard work in the open air, as theirs now on a wave-washed beach, alone can give.

The next day as the dawn was breaking, before even the sun came up, with the sky in the east flushed a pale rose over the gray sea, the four men began to swing the half-barrels on a long boom from the hold of the *Daphne* into the heavy rowboat alongside. Then a few at a time they were rowed to the shore, rolled up a trestle of boards to the deep trench and there lowered down into it, almost to water level, where the sand was cool and moist. It was hard, cruelly hard labor, and tempers began to crackle. The heat was severe and the stowing of the barrels called for skilled, painstaking work.

About three in the afternoon of this day, the cook lowered a cask before Crawford down in the trench gave the signal and the barrel struck the mate a glancing painful blow on his leg. Before the cook could do much more than say he was sorry, the mate was out of the trench and on him. Flood was helpless in his hands, for Crawford was a vicious rough-and-tumble fighter.

Many times in many ports and on many ships he had fought silently, viciously, untiringly, side by side or back to back with Wing. These times had cemented their friendship, enriched it and in a rough way, or so it seemed to them, ennobled it and now with the cook gone down under him, came the first sign of a break between the partners.

Wing came up on a run, furious from the heat and flies and the sweaty labor, and Tom did not even hear him yell at him to stop. No blow was struck, but the captain had started one and the mate saw it, saw his friend check it and both men forgot the cook, for that blow which was never given had hit both men in a way they had never imagined possible. Nothing was said; they just averted their eyes and the work went on.

The blazing sun seemed to be always above their heads, for the cool nights passed

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by so swiftly. No one grumbled much, but there was no hint of good spirit in the three men or the boy. They all worked sullenly, then as the end came in sight, feverishly, each man driving himself to his limit.

As if in grim caustic jest the day after the last cask was buried, broke cool and cloudy, and a sea breeze swept fresh over the little island. The men rested, loafing about the decks of the *Daphne*. An hour before getting under way, Wing asked the mate to talk with him below in his cabin. Each man felt a curious sense, not exactly of constraint, rather of uncertainty, in the air as they sat down, Wing on a bench running thwartship, Crawford on the edge of a locker, looking sullenly at the deck, both men thinking uneasily of the blow that had fallen days before. Impulsively, Wing reached out his hand and his partner grasped it eagerly.

"Well, began the captain, "the air has cleared of that rot. You know —— well it was the heat and flies and that back-breaking work. Now we'll get down to this business and get our plans lined up again. There is nothing new, I'll sketch them briefly for you and if you have any suggestions, shoot 'em in."

The mate nodded and Wing went on.

"We shall put to sea at once as soon as we can pull in the hook, five hundred miles from here you will go down into the bilges and start letting in the Atlantic Ocean. When enough comes in we'll abandon ship in the dory. With luck we'll get picked up in a short time, if not, we'll make Trinidad in ten days. We'll report striking an unknown object below the water-line, probably a submerged derelict. You and I and the cook can stand any cross-examination on this point. The boy don't count. He has no sense and if he had, it would be scared out of him when we hit the sea in an open boat. Tom, the whole thing is in your hands, the iron work of this ship will carry her down—" here Wing stood up and spoke with grim compressed lips— "providing you bore holes and more holes and then some more holes. She—must—go—down. We want no floating proof of our work. Good so far?"

The mate nodded soberly and the captain went on.

"When we get finished with our reports to inspectors, marine insurance agents, the owners and all the rest who come down on us, we'll separate. We've each got to hustle for the salvage money and we'll give ourselves a year to get it. We shan't meet till the year is up. On that day, you'll meet me at the Union Bar in Frisco. Then, Old-timer it 'sho for Rum Island with a chartered boat, raise the rum, sell it way down in Port of Madryn, you know, South Argentine in Chubut Bay. Wild place, we can sell it as it leaves the hold, while it's in the air, before it hits the dock."

"How have you fixed it with the cook?" asked the mate.

"He meets us in Frisco and comes with us on the salvage trip."

"Does he put in any money?"

"No," said Captain Wing. "I might have got him to, but I think it is better not; we'd have to increase his share and I can't see that. Any suggestions?"

"Not one," answered the mate with a grin. "Not one, you big blond pirate. It looks sweet to me, just as it is. Well, let's go."

Clear of the outer beach with the Argentine boy at the wheel, sailing with a light breeze on the quarter the *Daphne* headed into the east. To the oft-thrown backward glances of the captain, the mate and the cook, the island sent back its message, the age-old lure, the irresistible call of forbidden treasure.

SIX months later Crawford at his own request was paid off an oil-tanker as second mate. He went ashore at San Francisco with eleven hundred dollars and the intention of signing on again in a week, in all probability on the same ship, whose captain had plainly regretted his leaving. On the way to a hotel he stopped for a glass of beer at the Golden Gate Café and stayed there six hours, drinking champagne, talking to a woman. Mary Pannier was unbeautiful in body and worse in mind. She had an execrable temper, a treacherous nature, and a thirst that had never been quenched by any drink and could be relieved by one only, a particular favorite brand of champagne, Pol Roger.

These disadvantages would have been hopeless obstacles in her career had she not possessed to an unusual degree a quality that more than offset them all, a quality that she knew would win for her when the big test came, her opportunity, and the

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quality was—cleverness. Cleverness made her seem beautiful, good natured, loyal, made even her thirst inoffensive.

In the course of her first dance with the mate she figured him good possibly for a quart of Pol Roger and accordingly she used some cleverness, in a bored detached sort of a way. The mate thought it suggested by himself when they stopped dancing and sat down in a little alcove with heavy velvet curtains. When he told her that he had eleven hundred dollars in his wallet and recklessly showed it in proof, he thought that it was his own idea.

The Pannier knew he thought this and that this mistaken idea would help her get his eleven hundred dollars in the course of the night. Four times the discreet waiter brought a bucket of ice with its pure golden wine to the little alcove and while he hurried off for a fifth, Tom related vaguely, disjointedly, but with convincing truth, the story of the *Daphne*, the rum and Rum Island. Then came the Pannier's first display of real cleverness. She erased—there is no other word that fits—completely erased the mate's love for his friend, his loyalty to him, almost his remembrance of him.

Crawford saw just one person, Pannier, and she filled his mind to the exclusion of every other thought. In a sort of moral daze, but with sharpened executive ability he carried out her plans, and through her cleverness thought them his own. Every point that did not bear unfavorably on her plan she conceded generously to him, carefully avoiding any appearance of ruling him. She was sweet and gentle and she cloaked her inflexible will with an appearance of affection that he in his drinking felt was genuine.

And so through this woman came his treachery, for he sailed to Honduras with his money and some of hers, to charter a boat with a native crew; he was on fire to bring back the money, not only his own but also that of his friend, his partner, Buck Wing. And it was to bring back this treasure to his woman, the Pannier, that he betrayed his friend.

Not until he steered the small weather-beaten schooner through the inlet of Rum Island, did even a thought of his partner, his old Buck Wing, come into his mind; then it came as a remembered yell—

"Take the wheel, I can't see the —— channel."

For just a moment, the vision of his old friend came to his eyes, and too, the remembrance of the old mad days, and the thousands of miles the shipmates had traveled with just one real tie, friendship. A warning yell from a terrified lookout broke in upon his abstraction and he jammed the wheel hard over, narrowly escaping the reef. Then the still water in the lagoon, the sandy beach and the vision of "My old side-kick, and —— if I rob him, he'll get his half the day that I meet him; come lads sharp now," and he rode ashore in a dory with his heart clear and at rest, for he was not going to cheat Buck Wing.

He uneasily banished a little sense of doubt of the Panier's standard of fairness. He walked rapidly over the hard sand to the place where he and Buck had cached the casks and he saw a half-filled-in trench, a few broken barrel heads and staves, the handle of a shovel and sheer red uncontrollable rage. Captain Wing had been there first and had stolen the share of both!

He sat down on the sand, beaten, hopeless, half-mad with a sort of fear that had replaced anger. Everything was lost. As an added shock came his first clear idea, a sort of appraisement of the woman, and he could not imagine how it was that at this moment he disliked the thought of her. It was so and that was all that mattered, that and a hot lust for revenge upon Wing.

"They can't take that from me," he whispered grimly, as he steered again for the last time out of the lagoon into the blue open water. The night fell with the suddenness of the tropics, as if the day had collapsed, had simply ceased to be, as if it were gone, finished, in sympathy with the complete blasting of his own hopes. The sea was colorless and very still under the gentle night breeze, but the sky was ablaze with stars.

A golden moon riding high in the south traced out a path, a wavering elusive trail that shifted and disappeared even as the schooner entered it. And the mate looked forward at the silver path and shivered at its unreality, its emptiness, and sent a glance aft over the somber water and sighed as the island grew dim in the distance.

The Pannier met him at the dock in San Francisco and it took her less than five minutes to end the chapter of their life together that had really never begun. The ending was absurd in its simplicity, without

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the faintest trace of what Tom had expected; the wild disappointment, recrimination, and worst of all the fear that she would want to stay with him. To his brief statement of the complete collapse and failure of the expedition, she listened quietly, then looked into his eyes, saw the truth in them and spoke—

"Good-by sailor, good luck."

She flashed an unexpected smile at him with a hint of kindness in it and walked away and the mate never saw her again.

IN A small back room of the Union Bar on the Frisco water-front, Captain Buck Wing sat quietly drinking ginger ale and occasionally raising his eyes to the door and looking through it down the length of the long cool barroom. It was late in the afternoon of the day that he was to meet his partner and the cook, Flood, just a year after they had separated in Havana after the inquiry into the sinking of the *Daphne*.

In the captain's pocket was twenty-five hundred dollars and his fresh clean-looking face seemed to glow with radiant spirits under its heavy coat of tan. He thought—

"I'll be as glad to see that old scoundrel Tom as I will be to get under way for the island and I'll——"

A mighty shout of welcome came to his lips as he saw the swinging street-doors open and his old friend, his partner of the sea walk swiftly to him. Then he sensed something wrong, nothing definite, just a trace of constraint as the mate closed the door of the private room behind him and whirled around facing the captain and whispered through half-closed lips:

"I didn't think you'd be here, but I took a chance. You —— traitor! I feel like weeping, not fighting. Buck, Buck why did you do it?"

It was a queer fight. The mate, actually with tears on his cheeks flung himself at the bewildered captain and fought blindly. Not one blow in ten landed and Wing on his part never struck once. He simply fought defensively, waiting for a chance to close in and wrestle. In all his years of chances hastily taken, of sudden demands upon his courage, never had he met such an inexplicable, absurd, unanswerable happening at this. Apparently the mate was mad and Wing was convinced of this when Tom stopped fighting as suddenly as he had begun and slumped down on a chair, legs and arms sprawled out, head lowered with averted eyes. Wing drew a long breath and cried harshly—

"Now you fool, talk!"

And the mate did as he was asked and told him everything, of the woman, her sway over him, his own treachery and his discovery of Wing's. He poured out the story headlong, broken-heartedly and his big friend of the sea listened and understood with the completeness that comes of the sea, and the sympathy that comes of friendship.

He reached out his hand and the mate grasped it and both men felt foolish as strong men do when their emotions slip the leash of control. Then came Wing's turn to startle Tom, as he quietly said:

"Old-timer, in my wallet is twenty-five hundred dollars for the expedition to Rum Island. I have never seen the place since we separated."

"But the rum—gone—stolen," gasped Crawford. Then the truth struck him. "The —— cook!" he whispered and Wing nodded and stood up.

"Come Tom, we'll get a ship and put to sea and it's the straight road for us. We'll bank our twenty-five hundred and save our pay till some real square opportunity comes some day in some corner of the world."

The mate looked at him and together they passed out through the screen doors, down to the water-front.

IN A lodging-house in Port au Prince the sea-cook Flood sat on a bed covered with a soiled red quilt. Around, him in the form of a circle laid out as the points on a compass, were little bank-books with multicolored bindings and he was droning in a low singsong,

"North-west, north-west by north, north north-west, north by west, north!

"I quits the sea," he said and sighed as he spoke.

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"N'GULULE"

by F. St. Mars

Author of "Chivalry of the Wild," "Big Tusks," etc.

WELL, the dressing of the kill was done, not exactly with the fastidious finesse of lion or leopard, perhaps, but put through somehow. The beast seemed to just about guess it would do.

Then he turned round, still crouching, and one might easily have thought he was a leopard.

He stood up, however, and one saw that surely leopard never had such length of leg; so long a tail; so short a face; so round an eye; so slender a foot, with no sheaths for the partially retractile claws; so rigid a body, and stiff, with half the exquisite grace of all the leopards gone into greyhound-like limb; so unmistakably a third-rate gigantically magnified pussy-cat; and yet, he was all as big as a leopard—some seven feet from tip of short nose to end of clubbed tail.

He was, in fact, a medium-sized beast of no great heaviness, but carried considerable weight in that parched wilderness of big thirsts, where he pirated variously under the cognomen of chita, alias Cheetah, alias hunting leopard, alias and on Sundays *Cynoelurus jubatus;* and in the vernacular, as N'Gulule. Finally he was the fastest proposition in speed old Dame Nature had unloaded on this planet to date.

N'Gulule had killed a doe Grant's gazelle, who was a lady with strong opinions about her own speed, too. He had given her fifty yards' flying start, or rather she had taken it, and he had killed her in precisely the same distance and a cloud of dust. Now all that he wanted, being sufficiently a cat and a gentleman, was to be alone with his own meal.

Yet the last sobbing breath that escorted life out of the dainty Grant had barely ceased, ere shadows began to pass and repass athwart the tawny slayer and the tawny grass. N'Gulule lifted his short head, and, with bared fangs—like one who turns up his sleeves—growlingly cursed three shapes vol-planing to earth, far enough—and not too far away.

Common little naked-faced horrors of Egyptian vultures, these; but N'Gulule might have spared his curses. Wings swished overhead, and quickly nose-diving in spirals, sweeping, swerving, swooping, flattening out, banking, down they sucked like a cloud-burst—of feathers, Death's aerial patrol.

Griffon vultures, white-necked and immense; eared-vulfures, lobed and beastly; storks attached to beaks, whose name was adjutant or marabout. Not a nice crowd, but business-like. And they made a circle around N'Gulule, and the span of it was drawn with the compass of his power.

N'Gulule looked, and saw with the round eyes of him, under his round ears, in his round head, here and there and from time to time among the vultures, sharp-muzzled, prick-eared, energetic heads lifted to watch him. They were jackals, who had joined the vultures, gathered by what uncanny, marvelous intuition? So—o! N'Gulule began his meal at the heart.

It only needed a hated hyena-face or two, to make the audience complete, a pair of heads, dark heads, scowling heads, as if from the pit, slowly rose from the sea of grass, favored him with a demoniacal, energetic regard, and as slowly sank again from sight. The hyenas were there too.

Nevertheless, the chita was not afraid. At night perhaps, in rain. A dozen of them

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had been known to rush a leopard for a goat. But not here in the daylight. One reason perhaps why he, alone of all cats, did most of his hunting by the light.

So far as his audience, as it so far consisted, was concerned, he considered himself alone to feed at his leisure. It would have been death to any of them that came within that magic circle of his power. Death to—he had begun on the head and neck now—any fool beast who——

There had come a sound in the air, the rising of wings instead of the falling of them, and unmistakable. N'Gulule looked up sharply—few wild creatures dare take any chances—and saw that one side of the circle of his audience had been erased, as suddenly as if it were on a slate and a hand had come down and wiped it out.

The vultures and marabout storks there were in the air, the jackals four hundred yards away across the plain, the hyenas? The devil knew where his hyenas had invited themselves to. And instead—there was nothing. The short grass bent all one way in the hot wind. The shadows of the birds overhead peopled it. That was all.

N'GULULE'S head went right up on the column of his long strong neck. His round ears pricked forward. His clubbed tail—that irrepressible mirror of all cats' thoughts—took on the movements of a live snake.

Slow minutes crawled along with nothing doing, and—N'Gulule heaved himself to his feet, standing very erect and high on his long legs. He was growling a little now.

Perhaps the growl was wafted on the wind to the empty side of the circle. A head appeared above grass, which was so short that it seemed impossible that the head could have hidden a body behind it. The head might have belonged to a leopard if it had not possessed a black stripe running from the front corner of each eye to the upper-lip, and that made it the head of a chita.

N'Gulule sat down, very bolt upright, and straight. He looked all dog now. Not a bit cat. He was growling horribly, and his neck was arched as if he had on a bearing-rein. The expression growing into his eyes was not sweet.

Presently a body added itself to the head as it rose, and a long tail to the body. There seemed to be no interval between its rising in the grass twenty-five yards away and its landing about a yard in front of N'Gulule. It looked, till the very last second, as if it were going to land on him; but N'Gulule did not move—not an eyelid. He might have been blind, for all the notice he took, or an effigy in tawny ivory and jet. All the same, he knew he was booked for trouble with a rival male of his own kind.

For three minutes those two sat bolt upright, dog-fashion, staring into one another's smoldering eyes. Their ears were quite flat. You could see the wet glisten on their fangs. Then their two right forepaws whizzed up in exact unison, flickered—also in unison—and remained poised.

Anon, and as suddenly as if he had been sitting on a mine, the other chita shot backward, bounced round N'Gulule, who pivoted, shot in on to the place where N'Gulule was not because he had just miraculously left it, rebounded as one who has landed upon a spring-board, and was still—couched. No one could have told how they came to be locked and grappling. They scarce seemed to have moved, yet there they were rolling, biting, growling, snarling, tearing, clawing, wrenching, writhing in a blinding choke of dust and a whirligig of grass.

Now for a fraction N'Gulule showed on top, his belly roweled horribly by the foe's hind-claws. Now he was under, tearing like a mad thing at the other beast's hind-leg. Now the two, on hind-feet, and wrestling, were feeling for the strangle-hold; now flying apart; now hurling together; apart; together; apart; together: spinning around in a chaos, reeling, revolving—mad. Mad utterly, indistinguishable, incomprehensible, horrible, and all in a breath—dead!

Aye, dead, surely—they lay so deathly still. And yet—and yet— Was that N'Gulule quite dead? Did his flanks heave? His fangs certainly were well home in the other's throat. Five minutes passed without movement. Ten minutes—and already vultures were coming down.

A head rose warily and with slowness above the grass, a head that might also have belonged to a leopard, if it had not boasted a black stripe from ear to eye. And to the head was added a body, and to the body a tail, and the whole, in the form of a lean and limber female chita of sufficient youth, got up and sauntered forward,

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purring superciliously, to—to the carcass of the gazelle and upon it she fed.

There is little doubt perhaps that the two males had known that she was there from the start. They had died in their way for her. But she lived for—herself apparently. Hence, presumably, the purr. It filled the stagnant afternoon heat like the drone of a tired sawmill. It sent the vultures to sleep in their now somewhat bored but augmented circle.

At least they thought—or one supposes them so to think—they would have the two male chitas, as well as such joints from the Grant as madame chose to leave to feed upon. They could not get at the former yet, by reason of her near presence—she was only six yards away—but she would soon go. Chitas are no lingerers over their kills.

The beast, however, had eaten all the best parts of the prey before she leisurely rose, and stretched, cat-fashion, in the eye of the sun. Fastidiously she shook each taloned forepaw. Superiorly cleaned her face. Haughtily glanced at her late admirers, still as stones, the one outstretched on one spotted side, the other doubled in a heap. N'Gulule, the latter, still had his jaws fixed in his enemy's throat, locked home in death.

The female turned her back, and went her way—light as a ball of thistledown that is blown along by the laughing Summer breeze. A cactus-bush hid her within fifty-yards, and—the vultures, marabouts, jackals, and two striped hyenas, flung themselves upon the dead with a galvanized rush that was as indescribable as it was demoniacal—and hid them.

N'Gulule and his late rival vanished, I say, beneath a wave of feathers and fur, as the off-shore rocks vanish under the surge of the rising tide. What was left of the gazelle dissolved also invisibly, as sugar dissolves in a glass of hot water. A dozen beaks diagnosed N'Gulule's dozen wounds.

Then the diversion occurred.

THE conglomerate seethe of vultures and marabouts and jackals, that indecently hid N'Gulule for the performance of the last rites, rose bodily up. It was as if something lifted them. Two and three feet they rose before they realized it—slowly. Then they hurled, or were hurled, upward and outward, like a crowd standing above a delay-action mine that has gone off prematurely.

For one hectic moment there was vouchsafed an apparition—of a chita, reared straight up on end, hooked fore-paws striking right and left; mouth wide with gleaming red fangs ashine, eyes afire, and ears flat, in a whirling inferno of hurtling, threshing vultures, marabouts, and jackals, feathers, dust, fur-flecks, and—noises.

It was N'Gulule risen from the dead truly, the dead whom he had so nearly joined in their eternal unconcern. The stabs of a dozen beak instruments of torture had been the magic that electrified him back from the grave. Left alone perhaps, to the sun and the flies—but who can tell?

He was alive now, anyway; at least he was crawling off, staggering somewhat, shaky as a kitten on its first venturesome toddle, collapsing twice and lying still, then dragging slowly on. Away, away—anything to get away.

A hyena, seeing him go thus, and desperate at the sight of a lost meal, pounced open-jawed, with startling quickness, in upon the chita's flank. He—no, she—and a mother at that—meant to chop a bite, and leap clear. Actually, all beheld N'Gulule writhe upon himself and strike, like an electric shock, with armed fore-paw—once! And there was no need for any second blow. The hyena was reeling backward, spinning as she went, all the fight knocked out of her by that one round-arm blow.

Strangely enough N'Gulule was following the same trail—'twas a beaten game-path—taken by his female feline compatriot, and he was going to the same place, and for the same reason, but it had nothing to do with her.

How he reached the river finally, however, he alone knew. He dropped and lay still several times, and each time it seemed as if the shadow of death, that had been hanging over him every red yard of the way, must pounce and make it the last.

But the first hint of dusk, and the first zebras coming for the evening drink, found him lying flat to his drink on the river's brink. Beside him in the sand were the foot-prints that marked the spot where the female chita had drunk before him. You see, there was only one place, one place safe from the crocodiles, to drink at, and all the wild folk knew of it, of course, somehow or other.

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Even that spot, however, was only safe for the sound and alert, which explains why N'Gulule rolled three times over in the sand sidewise as the twelve-foot crocodile, horny, slime-covered, and nasty, took the shallows at full speed, drenching him with spray and snapping guillotine-jaws within a yard of his blood-stained head, as he did so.

Dusk, who is always on the hustle in those lone lands, slipped past hurriedly, laying her sad gray trail for night to follow her by. A buck impala antelope somewhere began grunting hollowly; a hippopotamus tooted like a river steamer; an ostrich boomed almost like a lion. There was a real lion somewhere, too—one heard the zebras stampede thunderingly at scent of him—but he was dumb, being hungry.

Shadows, not all motionless, began to assemble beneath the acacia-trees and among the wait-a-bit thorns. The cricket and the mosquito band struck up their jazz.

Fairies with flash-lamps—but they were fireflies really—started to whisk their winged two-step in the gathering dark. Thunder grumbled somewhere and unbarred the dark of night. A single giant drop of hot rain fell bang upon the very tip of N'Gulule's hot, dry nose, and he looked up, where he lay in the hot sand—looked up into the burning, round, green-lit orbs of the female chita. So close to him, she was, that she licked his battered face.

And I guess that is about all—unless it might be that she had known all the time that he was not dead, and that after her drink she had come back, and, being shy, watched him from cover, until the crocodile all but slew him. And that last scare probably precipitated matters.

N'Gulule became pretty much convalescent in about a week as wild beasts wonderfully do, a fact that ended one story and started another.

WEAVED BY WARNER

by W. C. Tuttle

Author of "Local Color in Loco Land," "Sun Dog Trails," etc.

A good lie is a thing of beauty,
But she busteth like a bubble
And raiseth —— with the innocent
And causeth plenty trouble.
—Muley Bowles.

And them is true words.
—Scenery Sims.

We rise to applaud them sentiments.
—Magpie, Ike, Jay Bird and Mighty.

IT HAS been said that I, "Chuck" Warner, am the worst liar in Yaller Rock County. That's a lie—I'm the best. I could tell the truth, but what's the use? Nobody'd believe me.

It has been said that I've got the eyes of a angel, the face of a horse and the ears of a jassack. Maybe I have. I reckon I've got complete control of my ear muscles, but the face and eyes of me are none of 'my doing.

Pa could wiggle his ear—he only had one, having lost the other one on an election bet in Oklahoma—but I know I never got my lying ability from him. Pa couldn't lie at all—and get away with it. He swore he didn't steal calves, but nobody believed him. In fact, I don't think they took time even to consider his statement.

I never try to prove anything. I just tell

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'em to take it or leave it. It sure is hard sledding for a liar in this cold, cold world; but I've knowed preachers who had a hard time getting along, as far as that's concerned.

This introduction don't figure much in this tale, neither is it an apology; it's just to show you that I'm not trying to crawfish out of any reponsibility. I don't shoot from ambush and I'm too honest to try and walk straight when I'm blundering drunk.

"Jay Bird" Whittaker is a God-fearing man, and pays me a monthly insult for punching his cows. Jay Bird is a human failure in lots of ways, but you've got to give him credit for using judgment in picking a good crew of cow-punchers.

There ain't nothing common about me, and Henry Peck, and Muley Bowles and Telescope Tolliver are above the average. We're ornamental, musical, and sometimes poetical. We don't go blindly into things. When Jay Bird gives us an order we holds a session over it, and don't accept the order unless in our judgment it's best for the Cross J outfit.

A word or two against the other punchers won't hurt nothing. "Muley" is too fat to be anything but a nuisance, but he can write poems. "Telescope" hails from the land of "cawn-juice," and he fights most of his feuds in his sleep. His folks raised him to be honest, but he growed so fast it never took. His head is so far from his feet that he has to look down to see if he's walking, and he's so thin that you can tell how many olives he's had for dinner.

Jay Bird comes to me and says:

"Chuck, I'm going to be gone a couple of days. There ain't much to be done around here, so don't exert yourselves. You fellers might build that new corral, but I don't know where I could hire anybody to dig the post-holes and set the posts."

"I hope you have a good time," says I. "Set on your pocketbook, or somebody will sell you something."

"I might hire some civil cowboys," says he.

"You won't," says I, "'cause they wouldn't work for you."

I went as far as Paradise with Jay Bird, and there I runs into "Mighty" Jones. Poor Mighty lives out in the hills and raises goats. He never gets any fun out of life except when he scalds his insides with wabble-water, and then he gets too sad to enjoy it. I feels awful sorry for him—honest.

I finds Mighty crying into his glass. I spends several pieces of silver trying to brace his feelings and dam his tears, but it's no use. Something is bearing down upon his nervous system. The more he drinks the more he weeps. I leads him outside and plants him in a shady spot.

"Now," says I, "open your soul, Mighty. Ain't I your friend?"

"Tha's right," says he. "I—I hate a liar."

"Somebody lied to you?"

He wipes away some tears and shakes his head.

"Nope. I'm the thing I hate, Chuck."

"Leave out something?"

"Leave ——! I put in too much."

Right then Mighty Jones opens his heart and tells me why he's mixing his tears with alkali dust.

IT APPEARS that Mighty left home early in life. He's got a sister, who ain't seen him since he was ten years old. About a year ago she finds out where he lives, and she writes him a letter. Seems that she married a doctor, who has oodles of money.

Mighty answers her letter, and then she writes some more. Seems that Amandy is some hand to brag about things, and it makes Mighty peeved. Then he sets down and raises the ante.

According to what Mighty tells her he's the *hombre* that the U. S. Treasury depends upon for supplies. Mighty don't stop at written words. Somebody sends Mike Pelly some pictures of a millionaire's rancho in California, and Mighty, like a danged fool, steals them photographs and sends 'em to Amandy. That rung the bell.

"Now, they're comin' here," weeps Mighty. "Right here!"

"Well," says I, "you'll have to face the music."

"I can't! I ain't got the nerve. Oh ——"

"Too bad," says I. "You lied too much, that's all."

"Can't you help me?" he begs. "Can't you meet 'em and tell 'em I've got smallpox or somethin'? I ain't got no wife nor family."

"Did you tell her you had a family?"

"Two boys," he sobs. "Fine children.

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Help me out, Chuck. They're on their way and will be here Monday."

"Monday? This is Saturday, ain't it?"

"You will help me?" he sobs. "You will? What do you want me to do?"

"Learn to tell the truth, Mighty. A lie is an abomination in the sight of the Lord."

"In mine too," he sobs. "Let's go have a drink."

This is all I'm going to tell of this here tale. I ain't no hand to talk about things, anyway, so I'll let Hen Peck give you the information. Hen has more education than the rest of us, and anyway, he'd want to cut in and correct me every little while. He'll likely lie to you about what happened, and I hope for your sakes you ain't prejudiced against liars like Jay Bird Whittaker.

Meet Henry Clay Peck.

I HEREBY swear that the above introduction to this tale is as true as anything Chuck Warner ever told. I'm down in Paradise trying to beat Mike Pelly's roulette-wheel when Chuck comes in.

"Magpie" Simpkins is in the same game. Magpie is one of them long-complected, do-or-die looking *hombres* with tired-looking whiskers. Chuck sets down on the table and considers Magpie.

After while me and Magpie quits playing, and then we meets Chuck outside.

"Did Jay Bird see you, Magpie?" asks Chuck.

"I dunno," says Magpie, caressing his mustache. "If he did he ducked, 'cause I ain't seen him today. What did he want?"

Well," says Chuck sad-like, wiggling his ears, "I'd be the last person on earth to mention it—if he hadn't told me. I don't mind lettin' Hen in on it, but I sure don't want Muley or Telescope to suspicion it for a minute.

"He told me to see if Magpie would do him a favor, but I reckon he didn't like to come out and tell it himself. Of course he ain't dead sure, but he thinks he's crazy."

Me and Magpie looks at each other and then back at Chuck.

"Not ravin' crazy, but somewhat loco," says Chuck, "the same of which is a —— of a condition to get into."

"What does he want—a keeper?" asks Magpie.

"Kinda," nods Chuck. "A keeper for the Cross J ranch."

"Hm-m-m-m," says Magpie dubious-like. "Tell us about it, Chuck."

"I don't know how true it is," says Chuck serious-like, "but this is how she appears to ne. Jay Bird's mind dwelleth upon matrimony. Somehow he gets to correspondin' with a female person who has a grown daughter.

"Of course that ain't no test of a man's sanity. Any man has a right to get heart-hungry and go calling for a mate like a bull moose.

"I reckon Jay Bird opened his heart too wide, and it appears that he told the widder woman more than was right. Jay Bird says it was lapses of memory or somethin', but anyway he finds himself writin' the dangedest bunch of stuff you ever seen.

"As soon as he assays himself mentally he finds that he don't assay much, and he gets a heap fussed. He don't want that woman. Why, Hen, you know how Jay Bird hates females."

"Yes," says I; "he ain't got much time for the calico-clad."

"Everybody knows that," says Magpie. "Then what did he do?"

"Well, he writes to her and tells her that he's mentally deficient and that he didn't mean all the things he wrote to her. I reckon he'd made a lot of promises, 'cause she writes right back and says something like this:

" 'I am a poor widder woman who is just tryin' to get along, and it ain't noways fair for you to trifle with my feelings. Maybe you has found some one else and are just trying to renege out of your promises. I have all your tender letters, which I can show in court, unless you have told me the truth about bein' crazy.

" 'I don't like to have everybody know I've loved a loco, so I am coming to Paradise to find out, and am going to bring a doctor to look you over. If he says you're loco it's all right, but if he says you're not—you've got to marry me.' "

"She's got a good case," says Magpie, " 'cause I don't think he's loco."

"Never can tell," says Chuck sad-like. "I'd hate like —— to see poor old Jay Bird get sent to the loco-lodge."

"What did he want to see me for?" asks Magpie.

"Well, he said that this was a chance to test friendship, Magpie. Jay Bird is too easy to hang something on to. He can't act

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a-tall. He figures out that you're the only person in Yaller Rock County who could impersonate him and get away with it.

"You ain't got nothin' to lose, Magpie. You'd have a lot of fun with that doctor. Right now Jay Bird is as sane as anybody, and he can't act crazy. He's afraid the doctor would find him sane and then he'd either have to marry the widder or get sued."

"Hm-m-m-m," says Magpie, "I hope Jay Bird appreciates what I'm going to do for him, Chuck."

"Well, if he don't he's crazy as ——, that's all I can say for him. Better go out to the ranch today, Magpie, and get used to Jay Bird Whittaker."

Then I manages to get Chuck cornered, takes his gun away from him and demands the truth. I got it—because he needed me in his business. I asks him how it's going to end and he shakes his head.

"I don't know, Henry. They say that truth is stranger than fiction, and maybe we'll get a chance to prove it."

"Danged sight better chance to get killed," says I, "Magpie will kill you as sure as thunder," and just then Ike Harper, Magpie's pardner, shows up.

He comes over to us, looks us over superior-like and says—

"Seen anything of Magpie around here?"

"Don't try to josh me," grins Chuck. "We're wise, Ike. You can't keep things like that under cover. Murder will out."

"Murder?" says Ike awed-like, "Magpie killed somebody?"

"Not yet," says I.

Ike stands there and chews on the ends of his mustache for a while.

"What's the joke?" he asks. "What am I keepin' under cover?"

"Aw, ——!" grunts Chuck. "Of course we appreciate the fact that you tries to protect your pardner, but this little old town will be there with all the tin cans in sight. *Sabe?*"

"Tin—cans?" says Ike soft-like, "Tin cans, Chuck? Why, Magpie——"

"Yeah. Why didn't he take some local female to be his wife?" asks Chuck.

"Of course a feller has a right to pick his life pardner where he listeth, but it ain't square on local folks. There's just as good girls——"

"Ho-o-o-ld fast," grunts Ike. "Magpie ain't married."

" 'Ain't' don't mean 'not goin' to,' " says Chuck kinda mad-like. "It ain't none of my business what he does, but I hate like —— to see a feller sneak away like that. What does he want to spend a honeymoon on a ranch for? Is he scared to face folks?"

"Ranch?" whispers Ike. "What ranch?"

"The Cross J. Old man Whittaker just moves out and says to Magpie:

" 'Here's the ranch, Magpie. I'm goin' to take a little trip, so yuh might as well spend your honeymoon out here in my house.'

"Now I reckon we've got to associate with a couple of love-sick loafers for a week."

"My ——!" gasps Ike, "I—I think I'll—uh—get a drink," and he walks toward the saloon like his feet are asleep.

"Where's Muley and Telescope?" I asks.

"Went to Silver Bend to the circus. Won't be back before tomorrow. I gave Sing Wah a vacation, Henry. He'll likely go to Silver Bend and smoke hop with his cousin."

"Who's goin' to do the cookin'?"

" 'Potlatch' Fanny."

"That fat Injun? Jay Bird won't allow her on the ranch, Chuck."

"Who's runnin' this ranch? Potlatch can cook—when she's sober."

"Yes," says I, "when she's sober, but she ain't been sober since the battle of the Big Horn."

"Far be it from me to question the morals of a true American," says Chuck. "Fanny's all right, Henry, even if she does weigh ten pounds for every year of her life. She was willin' to take the job."

ME AND Chuck rides home and Magpie comes down to the bunkhouse to see us.

"Chuck, I had my doubts about Jay Bird bein' crazy, but after seein' what he hired to do the cookin'—all doubts is dispelled," states Magpie.

"Fanny can cook," says Chuck.

"——, yes!" grunts Magpie, "Sure she can, Chuck; but nobody could eat it."

"You've got to humor a crazy man," argues Chuck.

"I ain't crazy," says Magpie, "so yuh don't need to humor me, I reckon. I'll be —— if I'm goin' crazy either. Fanny and her ptomaine pizen can act plumb rampant, but little Magpie eats canned stuff, believe me."

"It won't be for long," says I.

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"Not if I can prove my state of mind," grins Magpie. "I wish Jay Bird could see it. He'll never appreciate what I'm doing for him."

"No," says Chuck, "I don't suppose he will. You'll get your reward in heaven."

"Hm-m-m-m," says Magpie serious-like, "Feller like me is takin' a long chance on ever gettin' close enough to collect."

The next day me and Chuck went to the depot and met the folks.

Honest to grandma, they're assorted. The doctor is one of them cadaverous-lookin' *hombres* with a "as good as can be expected" expression on his long face. He suffers in his feet from bunions.

The lady is built just the opposite. She's almost as wide as she is tall, and so fat in the face that her nose don't show in a side view.

The daughter takes after the old man. She's tall and gaunt and innocent-lookin'.

They climbs off the train and looks around. Me and Chuck walks up to 'em and Chuck says—

"Howdy, folks."

"Ah," says the doctor, "I am looking for——"

"I know," says Chuck. "He sent us after you. We're the hired help."

"Chauffeur?" puffs the fat lady.

"Warner," states Chuck. "Got any plunder?"

"Plunder?" asks the doctor.

"Baggage, handbag, war-sack, te-runk."

"Oh—er—yes. Our trunks. Exactly. Yes indeed. We will likely sojourn here for some time. Where is the car?"

"Car?" asks Chuck.

"Automobile."

"Oh—yeah. Automobile. Gettin' fixed. We brought the buckboard."

Mamma waddled all around that vehicle, looks at them half-broke roans and then shook her head.

"It would be all my life is worth."

"More," admits Chuck solemn-like. "Lots more. But you can't walk four miles."

The Lord only knows how we got 'em all into that buckboard, but we did. We put one trunk in the back, and left six more at the depot. Chuck, the doctor and the daughter sets in the seat, while me and mamma sets on the trunk. The load is so heavy that the springs of the equipage are null and void.

Chuck's a good driver when his mind is on his work, but a brake to him is just a ornament or something put on there to rattle. We went through Wind River Crossing so fast that the wheels hardly got damp. It's a steep pitch on each side, but Chuck was like—wasn't it Napoleon who said, "There ain't no Alps?" Well, Chuck must 'a' said to himself, "There ain't no Wind River Crossin'."

Them broncs just skidded across, hit the steep pitch with slacked tugs and then jerked out. Chuck should have known that me and mamma didn't have nothin' behind our backs except the river. I know I turned over twice and went into that beautiful streamlet like a kingfisher.

I can't remember of feeling remorse, but something seems to depress me. In fact, it despressed me until I felt the boulders at the bottom of the river digging into my spine. Then I turned over, hooked my toes behind a boulder and lifted.

I managed to get my head out of water just in time to see a bulky object turn over in the water, and up comes the head of mamma. She explodes a lot of water out of her nose and mouth, and then she starts right across the river, twisting and staggering like a barrel in a flood.

"Hey!" I yelps. "You're going the wrong way!"

She turned around to see who yelled, and she sets right down in the middle of the river. She went plumb out of sight for a moment, and when she shows up again she's coming my way.

It took her a long time to get her breath. She stands there puffing and panting, with the water dripping off her nose. She tries to talk, but her vocal cords are too moist. The buckboard is out of sight.

After while she says—

"I'm going to make it warm for that driver!"

"I envy him," says I, " 'cause I'm danged near froze."

"Never missed us," she wails. "None of them."

"Except the horses," says I. "They likely do."

Just then the buckboard shows up again, with everybody looking for us. Chuck is almost overcome with emotion. Mamma sets in the seat this time, and the doctor joins me in the rear. I can't see Chuck's face, but I can see his ears wiggling.

"This is terrible," says the doctor. "Wet all over."

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"We were stunned," wails daughter, "but the driver felt sure he knew where to find you, mamma."

"I never lost anybody yet," says Chuck, and then we drove into the yard of the Cross J ranch house.

"I FEEL sure that you have made a mistake," declares the doctor. "This is not the place at all."

"Not the remotest possibility," adds the daughter, whose name is Violet. "Uncle sent us the pictures of his estate and——"

Just then Magpie comes out of the front door. I takes one look at him, and I almost falls off that trunk. He's got his shirt on backwards, one shoe and one boot on his feet, and on his head he's got a little green derby hat which Weinie Lopp stole from a pin-headed gambler three years before.

It sets right on the top of Magpie's head, sort of balancing-like. Magpie grins like a danged fool, and comes down the steps, stiff as a board, tryin' to balance that fool hat. He turns his whole body when he turns his head, and he sort of holds his hands like a dancin' bear holds its paws.

The doctor takes off his glasses and squints at Magpie, breathes on the glasses, rubs 'em on his handkerchief and puts 'em on again, and all the while that long, crazy-looking puncher stands there and just grins.

"Well, we got 'em," says Chuck, choking-like.

"Can this be he?" gasps mamma.

"How absolutely impossible," whispers Violet.

"I am glad to see you, sir," says the doctor, climbing down. "You—uh——"

"He, he, he!" chuckles Magpie. "You're just in time for the May-pole."

"Well," says the doctor weak-like, "well—uh—that's very nice. We may as well go into the house."

"But this isn't the place," protests Violet. "Those photographs——"

"Exaggerated maybe," says Chuck.

"Exaggerated?" puffs mamma, looking around. "Heavens, I wonder what kind of a camera took them?"

"Let us go inside," says the doctor. "My dear, perhaps we can get you some dry clothes, at least."

The three of them files up the steps, and right behind them goes Magpie, stiff as a peeved grizzly, trying to balance that dog-goned derby on his head.

We takes the team down to the corral, and then both of us went down to the bunk-house and cried on each other's shoulders. We're almost sick from internal combustion, when the door opens and in comes the doctor. He shuts the door soft-like, and peers at us.

"What can we do for you?" asks Chuck.

"I—I just don't know how to—er—express it," says he foolish-like. "I—er—have you noticed anything queer about my brother-in-law?"

"Oh, him," says Chuck, glancing at me. "He's always that way. He's grieving."

"Grieving? What about, pray tell?"

"Pray tell?" asks Chuck solemn-like. "Well, if you puts it thataway I don't mind. Ordinarily I wouldn't breathe a word of it, but you bein' one of the family I don't mind telling you about it. He's grieving about his sons."

"Oh, I see. What about them, if I may ask?"

Chuck sneaks over to the door and peers outside. Then he comes back and whispers to the doctor—

"They're in jail for stealing sheep!"

"Heavens! You don't mean it!"

"Absolutely."

"Well, I—I—don't know what to say or do."

"Nice boys, too," says Chuck sad-like. "Poor fellers!"

Just then we hears voices outside, and Chuck slips to the door. He takes one look and closes the door softly.

"They've come back," he whispers, "both of 'em. They must have broke jail."

We stands there sort of silent for a while, and pretty soon the door opens and Muley Bowles' fat carcass comes in. He's dragging a saddle which he hangs on a peg, and then he sees the doctor.

"Howdy, Lemuel," says Chuck solemn-like. "How are yuh?"

"Never felt better nor had less," grins Muley. "Had the best time I ever had in my life."

"You—er—really ought to be ashamed of yourself," states the doctor.

Muley stares at him, then at us.

"Yeah," grunts Muley. "Ought to be."

"You should!" snaps the doctor, drawing himself up like he expected a fight. "Have you no consideration for your poor father? Have you no sense of right or wrong, young man? Your wild escapades have disturbed

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his mental balance, and I fear for his sanity.

"Now you further aggravate the situation by defying the law. I have no time for such as you," and he walks to the door.

Muley watches him go and then looks at us with his mouth open and his eyes staring.

"Well—well, I'm a —— liar if I—uh—" and then he sets down on a bunk.

"Gents," says he slow-like, "I went to a circus. I seen the animiles and the clowns and the freaks. I had a few drinks, and then I thought I came home, but by the pins on a porkypine, I ain't sure of the last. Who in —— was that preacher—if it was?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" whoops Chuck. "He—he made a mistake, Muley. He thought you was Telescope. We told him that Telescope just came in, and he thought you was him."

"But who in —— is he?"

"He was sent up here from Telescope's home town," explains Chuck. "Telescope's paw is losing his mind, and they think Telescope is to blame. Seems that Telescope got mixed up in some trouble down there and broke jail. It has preyed on his paw's mind until——"

"Telescope did? Why, he told me his paw was dead."

"Ashamed to tell the truth maybe."

"Maybe," nods Muley. "Seems funny though, Chuck. Telescope tells me that there's seventeen children in their family, and if that's a fact, how in —— can his paw's mind dwell on any certain one of 'em?"

"Ask the investigator," advises Chuck. "I'm no encyclopedia, Muley."

"None of my business," says Muley. "Any man whose brains can get affected over the misdeeds of a *hombre* like Telescope ought to be given a sheep and plenty of range to roam over. I'm going to sleep—me."

Muley piles into a bunk and me and Chuck goes outside.

"My——!" grunts Chuck. "Take a look!"

Telescope is standing near the corner of the porch watching Magpie, who is out in the front yard doing a war-dance and balancing that little derby hat on his head. There ain't nothing wild and free about that dance, but it sure is weird. He takes one or two little teetering steps and then a shuffle; and all the time he's singing:

"Hiyah, hiyah, hiyah, hiyah! Hiyah, hiyah, hiyah!"

Me and Chuck sort of walk slow-like up to Telescope, who turns and looks at us wondering-like, and then back at Magpie. Just then the doctor comes out on the porch. Telescope glances at him, blinks his eyes and looks at Magpie.

"Chuck," whispers Telescope, "what's the matter with him?"

"You can ask that?" says the doctor. "You can ask that?"

Telescope stares at the doctor and then at Magpie.

"I—I th-think I can," stutters Telescope.

"You ungrateful son," says the doctor pious-like. "Look upon your handiwork."

"Mine?" croaks Telescope.

"Yes—yours! Your greed for your neighbors' sheep."

"Hiyah, hiyah, hiyah, hiyah!" chants Magpie, shuffling past us, with his neck held stiff to balance that hat.

Telescope blinks his eyes and starts away. He acts like a dazed man. He looks sad-like at me and Chuck, and says:

"Any man is a —— fool to mix circuses and whisky. I'm through with both," and he weaves toward the bunk-house.

Magpie shuffles past us again and then climbs on the fence-post, where he humps up like a buzzard, flaps his arms a few times and then appears to go to sleep.

The doctor stares at Magpie for quite a while, and then goes back into the house. Magpie watches him go, and then hisses at us—

"Betcha forty dollars he decides I'm crazy."

"Betcha forty dollars he ought to be examined if he don't," says Chuck.

"I'm doing my dangdest," states Magpie. "But after seeing that fat female and her offspring I'm sure as —— going to keep away from Jay Bird—he's loco as a shepherd."

"Keep up the good work," says Chuck. "You're doing fine."

Magpie nods, and me and Chuck walks down to the corral, where we humps up on the top pole and sobs on each other's shoulder. We can hear Magpie's voice chanting, "Hiyah, hiyah, hiyah, hiyah!" again, so we figures he's got another audience. We sees Telescope saddle his bronc, swing into the saddle and hit off across the hills toward Piperock.

"Wonder where he's going?" says Chuck as Telescope fades out of sight.

"*P-s-s-s-s-st!*"

We turns and looks down into the face of

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Mighty Jones. His whiskers twitch a heap, and then he climbs up beside us.

"Did—did they come?" he asks.

"Uh-huh," grunts Chuck. "They did, Mighty, and you've sure got a chance to feel sorry for yourself."

"Huh? Feel sorry for me?"

"Yeah. This brother-in-law of yours comes out here to invest money. *Sabe?* He's anxious to get a herd of goats—and you own all the visible supply. If you hadn't 'a' lied to him you might 'a' sold him your herd for a danged good price. He don't know goats."

"Does he know?" gasps Mighty. "Does he?"

"He don't know much," admits Chuck.

"Does Amandy have any suspicions, Chuck?"

"No, but I reckon she's got everything else, Mighty."

"What did yuh tell 'em? Are they here now?"

"What could I tell 'em? You can't lie in a case like this. Your sister said she was sorry you lied, and wished you hadn't. The doctor says he'll never forgive yuh, Mighty. He wants to raise goats for scientific purposes."

"Well, won't he buy my goats, Chuck? I've got eighty-seven as fine goats as ever—uh—as yuh ever need. I won't lie about them goats, will I?"

"Goats ain't nothin' to lie about, Mighty," says Chuck. "Innocent little goaties."

Mighty climbs down off the fence and hitches up his belt.

"I wish to gosh I'd 'a' jist faced 'em out on it."

"Uh-huh," says Chuck sad-like. "I wish you had, Mighty. You'd sure 'a' saved me lot of annoyance. Better go up to the house and confess your sins."

"No-o-o-o, I ain't prepared—yet."

He walks over to his horse and fogs away.

"Chuck," says I, "will you ever tell the truth?"

"The truth is stranger than fiction, Henry."

"To you—yes," says I. "An absolute stranger."

"I'd like to tell the truth," says he sad-like, "but nobody'd believe me. Would you, Henry?"

"Not by a —— sight; I know you too well. If you had different kind of eyes, maybe a feller could tell."

"From the complications, Henry—I may have very soon."

We climbs down and wanders toward the bunk-house when mamma shows up. She waddles down to us and we wait for her. She glares at Chuck, and says—

"You are discharged, young man."

"I'm awful danged sorry," says Chuck, wiggling his ears. "What for and who fires me?"

"I do! I will not have my brother imposed upon any longer. I told him what you done to me; told him all about you leaving me in the river, and he, even with his enfeebled mind, grew hysterical over it. I think it is a lucky thing for him that the doctor and I arrived when we did.

"Do you know where his wife is? We haven't seen her since we came, and he only stares at us when we question him."

"My——!" gasps Chuck. "You don't reckon he's done away with her, do yuh?"

"Bet a dollar he has," says I. "Wasn't he dancing the Death-Dance a while ago?"

"Heavens!" gasps mama hoarsely. "I must tell the doctor," and she waddles back toward the house as fast as she can waddle.

"Henry," says Chuck, "shake. You do get an idea once in a while."

"I've got the idea that I'm hungry," says I. "Let's go up to the house and see what's the chances of a feed."

NIGHT has settled down upon the Cross J, and we ain't eaten since breakfast. There ain't a danged soul in the kitchen, but we can hear voices in the other room. Magpie is saying:

> "Mary had a little lamb;
> Its hide was black and blue.
> It wandered on a railroad track,
> And the brakie had a stew."

There is silence for a minute and then the doctor says—

"There's no question but what sheep has deranged his mind."

"Sheep?" asks Magpie. "Did you say 'sheep'?"

"Yes, of course; but never mind, you are among friends at last."

"Sheep," says Magpie sort of soft-like. "Sheep?"

"Your children are to blame," says the doctor soothing-like. "They stole sheep; don't you remember?"

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"Oh," says Magpie, and then after a long silence. "They did, eh?"

"And got put in jail, but they broke out," explains the doctor.

"My ——!" chokes Magpie. "Your mind is in a —— of a shape, old-timer. You ain't fit to judge your feller men. I ain't got no children. I ain't even got a wife."

"Try and be calm," says the doctor. "Don't try to think—please. Just leave it all to me and your sister and we'll see that nothing harms you."

Comes the sound of footseps and Magpie staggers into the kitchen. He looks at me and Chuck and then back at the door.

"——'s delight!" he whispers. "Somebody's loco and—and——"

Comes a noise in front and somebody tramps into the front door.

"I'm the sheriff," squeaks a voice, and we recognizes "Scenery" Sims, the sheriff. He's a little periwinkle with a voice like a rusty hinge.

"I see," says the doctor. "I—er— Perhaps you—uh—are needed. Did they break out of jail?"

"Who?" squeaks Scenery.

"The sheep-thieves. They deserve incarceration, I assure you."

"The —— they do," shrills Scenery. "What are you talkin' about anyway?"

"Don't you understand?" wails the doctor. "They——"

"There are more imbeciles to the square inch around here than any other place in the world," states mama, cuttin' in on the conversation.

"Imbeciles?" squeaks Scenery. "Never heard of any. Telescope told me——"

"There is one of them sheep-thieves!" explodes the doctor.

There ain't a word spoken for a full minute, and then Scenery's voice—

"Muley, when did you steal sheep?"

"*Crash!*"

I OPENS the door and right into us walks Scenery Sims. Over his right ear is hanging a hunk of Jay Bird's pottery tobacco-jar, and in his eyes is a most curious look. He circles the kitchen, hits the back door the second time around, walks right out of the door, and to our ears comes sad and low—

"Swing low, Sweet Chariot, comin' fer to carry me
ho-o-o-o-me."

"My gosh!" grunts Chuck. "He fell into the woodshed!"

"I'm goin' out," proclaims Magpie. "I need air," and he staggers out of the door.

"You have no sense of shame," we hears the doctor say. "You most likely killed the officer."

"I hope so," says Muley. "The —— fool said I stole sheep. Who told him I stole sheep?"

"I did, because I thought he ought to know it."

"Who in the —— are you?" gasps Muley.

"I—I am your uncle. This lady is your father's sister."

"And—and I st-stole sheep?" gasps Muley.

"And deranged your poor father's mind," adds the doctor.

"Oh!" grunts Muley. "Oh, very well. I'm— who am I?"

"Mister Jones' son."

"Oh—sure," says Muley awed-like. "Paw's name is Jones and I stole sheep. I —I give you good afternoon."

We hears Muley walk out on to the porch, and then comes a crash.

Chuck runs to the window, and then turns with the tears running off his nose.

"Muley walked right off the railing," he chokes, "My ——, what next?"

The doctor steps out of the door and looks at us.

"My man, will you please bring the car to the door? We are leaving at once."

Chuck nods—he can't speak—and we single-files out of the door.

Magpie is setting on a saw-buck in the yard.

"They've decided to go," says Chuck hoarse-like. "I'm going to hitch up the team."

"Thank ——," says Magpie pious-like. "I'll help you. No, I won't either. I'm going to get a decision from the doctor before he leaves. He's just as crazy as I am; do yuh know it?"

"I reckon everybody is a little crazy," says Chuck.

"Except me and you," says I, "and I'm beginning to suspicion us."

We hitched up that ornery team of roans and tied them to the corner post of the porch. Then we went inside.

The doctor and his family are ready to go, I reckon, but Magpie sort of stands blocking the door.

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"It is really no concern of mine," says the doctor. "It is a case for an alienist."

"I don't give a dang," says Magpie. "You're going to examine me right now."

"But, my dear fellow, I am not qualified to judge. To outward appearances you are mentally deficient, and I might say, 'I think you are deranged,' but I can not make a definite statement."

"I won't marry the woman," says Magpie, "She can sue and be danged, but I won't marry her. Now you examine me, will yuh? You're a doctor, ain't yuh?"

"But not an M.D., my dear man. I am a doctor of divinity."

"Divinity?" says Magpie. "Divinity? What kind of a disease is that?"

Before the doctor can answer Magpie's question there comes a racket on the porch, and Jay Bird Whittaker's voice is raised in anger:

"Gol dingle-danged if you do! Get to —— out of here with that thing."

"Aw-w-w-w-w!" wails a voice. "Gotta take it in where it's light, ain't I? You got to see him to appreciate him, Jay Bird."

"Not in my house," yells Jay Bird. "Get out!"

The door jerks open and there stands Jay Bird in the doorway.

He stares at us for a while, and then Magpie says:

"It didn't work, Jay Bird. This *hombre* is a doctor of divinity."

Jay Bird stares at Magpie and then all around the room.

"I done my dangdest," says Magpie. "I've been crazier for you than I've ever been for anybody, Jay Bird, and I hope you appreciate it."

Jay Bird scratches his chin and looks blank-like, and just then Mighty Jones crowds in beside him, hanging on to a rope.

"I could only bring one," says Mighty, taking off his hat. "But he's——"

Zowie!

Between Jay Bird's legs comes a streak of gray, and lands right in our midst.

I seen Jay Bird's right leg go skyward when that rope tightened, and he lands on the back of his neck. That streak of gray wasn't house-broke, and it likely got stage-fright.

It hit Magpie below the knees and he played a billiard off the doctor. Me and the gray streak got the same idea at the same time, I reckon. I meant to catch it and it meant to catch me.

I reckon I meant well, but the gray streak beat me to it. I landed with my arms around mama's waist, and like a danged fool I hung on long enough to make her lose her balance. I hit my head on the floor, the same of which acted as an anesthetic and I didn't feel the pain of having three hundred pounds on my carcass.

I don't know how long afterward I regained the sense of seeing, taste and smell. I sat up and looked around. Magpie is behind the sofy, peeking over the back, and on the floor with his back against the sofy is Jay Bird.

Mama and Violet are backed into a corner, hanging on to each other. Standing on a chair in a prayerful attitude stands the doctor, while in the middle of the floor sets Mighty, hanging on to the horns of that danged gray goat. Everything is very still for a moment after I arrives on earth again, and then Mighty croaks—

"I'm willin' to admit that I lied—willin' as ——; do yuh hear me? I could have brought the whole herd, but I thought you could tell something about the stock if I just brought a sample. This is a cross between a angory and a mountain goat."

The doctor still rolls his eyes to the ceiling and don't say a word.

"Gosh dang it, make up your mind," wails Mighty. "This animile ain't no statoo. Do yuh buy or don't yuh? Whoa, you —— fool!"

I sees Jay Bird twist his neck and look at Magpie, and then he wets his lips. Magpie does look funny with his shirt on backward.

"——!" gasps Jay Bird. "You've either got a flexible neck, Magpie, or you ain't going to be worth much after tonight."

"I done my best," says Magpie. "Nobody could 'a' done more for you than I have, Jay Bird."

"Everybody's crazy," croaks mama. "Everybody."

"Amen," says the doctor.

Just then we hears a lot of racket out in front, and the door opens and Ike Harper steps inside. He looks around the room foolish-like.

"What's the idea of the goat?" he asks. "Goats don't figure in honeymoons, do they?"

Then he sees Magpie. He steps closer

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and looks at him. Magpie stares at Ike and tries to grin, but it looks painful.

"Holee sufferin' sunfish!" whispers Ike. "Magpie, you're badly twisted. Where is the bride?"

"Bride?" croaks Magpie. "Bride?"

"Lemme loose, daw-w-w-gone yuh!" squeaks a voice in the kitchen. "Fanny, you aboriginal scavenger, let go!"

"Here she comes," says Chuck, and into the room comes Potlatch Fanny, and she's got Scenery Sims by the back of the neck.

"Whew!"

I got one whiff as she comes in. Horse-liniment and vanilla!

Into the room she comes, and stands there blinking. She's a sight. Horse-liniment don't make a sweet-smelling jag, but I reckon it's effective.

"Here—she—comes?" croaks Ike. "I thought— Scenery, did you marry her?"

"Marry ——!" squeals Scenery, "I found her in the woodshed!"

"Where is your wife?" yelps Ike wild-like at Magpie.

"Wait," says mama. "He can't admit anything because his mind is gone, but perhaps his child will know. There he is—ask him."

Muley is standing in the doorway to the kitchen. He looks like he had been soaking his head in water to try and wash out the cobwebs. He seems to try to speak, but his voice won't work.

"We can go now if you're ready," states Chuck to the doctor. "The wagon is outside."

Ready? Say, them three people almost cut the door off the hinges getting out and into the wagon, and Chuck went right behind them. I reckon they wasn't in no bigger hurry than he was.

"Gosh dang it, make her let loose!" wails Scenery. "I came up here to get a crazy man, and——"

"Bring the sweet things out, Ike!" yells a voice outside, and Potlatch Fanny staggers out of the door, dragging the protesting Scenery with her. Just as they hit the porch, —— busts loose for noon. I reckon that Ike had brought half the population of Yaller Rock County up to that shivaree, and had managed to sneak them all up in the dark without anybody hearing their approach, and they've got every kind of a noise-producer from sleigh-bells to shotguns.

I ducked out of the kitchen door, cut around the corner and hopped into the back of that wagon just as the parade reached the steps. Chuck is a good driver as I've said before, but no half-broke bronc will "drive" in a case of that kind—they just move, that's all.

I reckon Chuck forgot that they were tied to that corner post, but being tied wasn't nothing in their young lives. They surged back and took out that post, root and branch, and then went ahead. The right front wheel climbed the porch, and we went regardless. There's five more posts under that porch. I stayed for three more, and then I got pitched high and handsome, and went into a front window backward.

I seemed to drop into something, and we went across the room together, where I caressed the wall with the top of my head. Then this unknown power seems to jerk me across the floor, and I finds myself being yanked over that busted porch, down the steps and into a circle of light.

I looks at my motive power and finds that danged goat standing on my lap, with its horns hooked under my cartridge-belt. That poor goat wanted to get loose awful bad. It would pull back real hard and then forward quick to take up the slack.

Man, it was some sensation. Every time it came forward it hit me under the point of my wishbone. Why didn't it let loose? You don't "let" goats loose—you force 'em loose, and I was all out of force. My belt-buckle was in the back.

But the goat solved the problem. It hit me extra hard, knocked me flat on my back. the same of which also upset the goat, and its horns comes out from under that belt like unhooking one of them wire puzzle things.

I gets to my feet and started to walk. I just wanted to get away from there. I've got one leg which don't work right, but I done the best I could, and after I've walked about six miles I reached the door of the bunk-house. It wasn't six miles as the crow flies, unless the crow was lost.

I fell in across the doorstep and joins company with Magpie, Mighty, Jay Bird, Ike and Muley. They sure are a bunch of casualties. They don't welcome me—neither do they kick me out; so I hauls myself to a bunk and sets down.

There is silence for a while, and then Magpie says—

"Then you wasn't crazy a-tall, Jay Bird?"

"I dunno," says Jay Bird foolish-like.

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"I knowed Magpie was," croaks Muley. "If he wasn't I was. Which was it?"

"I believed what I heard," says Ike, "which is a sign of locoism."

What in —— was Mighty doin' there with a billy-goat?"

"Tut-tryin' to make a sus-sale," stutters Mighty, "I—I—I lied to my sister, and when she said she was comin' to visit me I lost my nerve and Chuck offered to take care of it for me, and——"

"Chuck!" gasps Jay Bird. "I knowed it! I knowed it!"

"And I made a danged fool of myself!" wails Magpie. "I'm——"

Just then the door opens and Scenery Sims, minus his shirt, a few teeth and one leg of his pants, staggers into the door. He squints at us, and then squeaks hoarse-like: "My ——, what a trip I've had! But I lived through it. Now, I'm going to do my solemn duty. I comes up here to arrest a crazy man, and Scenery Sims never fails. I've gone through —— and high water, but I ain't never faltered, gents. It ain't exactly clear in my mind who it was, but I'll leave it to you. Who is the crazy man I came after?"

Scenery leans against the foot of a bunk and makes funny noises deep in his throat. The assembled company looks around at each other and then Magpie slowly raises his right hand. Then up goes Muley's hand. After a moment Jay Bird and Ike reaches up in solemn oath.

Scenery stares at them hands, and then looks at me. I put up both of mine. Then Scenery runs his tongue around the inside of his mouth, sort of feeling of his vacancies, and then looks down at his missing pant-leg and then at the shirt he ain't got on.

Then he sways away from the bunk and grabs the door-knob in his left hand, where he teeters on his heels and stares at us. He spits disgusted-like, and holds up his right hand. "Gents," he squeaks, "let's make it unanimous. I've only got one empty cell, and nobody needs solitude more than me. *Adios.*"

"Do you think Chuck will ever come back?" asks Magpie.

"If he does he's crazy as ——!" howls Jay Bird.

"Do you think he will, Henry?" asks Muley.

"Takes brains to think," says I. "Time alone will tell."

"I hope it tells the truth," says Jay Bird.

This is the second issue of *Adventure* on the three-times-a-month plan. The next issue will appear September 30. The regular dates are the 10th, 20th and 30th of the month.

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THE RANGER

by **Henry Herbert Knibbs**

UP FROM the sage to the piñon, up from the piñon to pine,
Viewing his mountain dominion from valley to far timber-line,
A lusty young ranger came singing a song to the musical drone
Of his pack-horse's bell, that was ringing a queer little tune of its own.

"Step along, you, Lazy! Hop along, you, Blue!
Don't you let the evenin' get ahead of you!
Yonder goes the sunlight slidin' down the Pass,
And—a mile to make Chilao and water, wood and grass.

It's coffee, beans and bacon—and then a little smoke.
And some as think that rangin' is nothin' but a joke;
Sweatin' with a trail crew, powder, pick and drill,
First you got to excavate and then you got to fill.

Linin' up your switch-backs, cuttin' down the grade—
It ain't exactly loafin' and smokin' in the shade.
Pullin' down a pay-check in the Service means
Raisin' plenty blisters and wearin' out your jeans.

Mebby-so it's healthy when there's nothin' more
Than workin' only twelve hours out of twenty-four;
Mebby-so you're sleepin' when 'tingle' goes the phone:
'Fire has been reported up on San Gorgone.'

Fordin' when the stream's high, ridin' in the rain;
Livin' close to Nature is givin' you a pain;
Slippin' on the round rocks, splashin' through the dark,
Wishin' you was Noah, squattin' in his ark.

And you got to *sabe* packin'—of course you got to ride;
You got to be a doctor, you got to be a guide,
Carpenter, surveyor, timber-cruiser, cook,
And you got to know a whole lot that isn't in the book.

You got to *sabe* grazin'—and how to draw a lease;
You got to listen both ways and try to keep the peace.
When you ain't a-dousin' camp-fires left by city sports,
You're settin' in your cabin, makin' out reports.

Oh, it's great to be a Ranger and with the Rangers stand
With sweat upon your forehead, a shovel in your hand,
Mendin' trails and ditchin' until your back is broke;
Oh, it's coffee, beans and bacon—and then a little smoke."

Over the sage and the piñon, over the spruce and the pine
The Midsummer moon held dominion from valley to far timber-line.
A star on a *concha* was gleaming. Asleep in his rowdy and jeans
A lusty young ranger was dreaming of—coffee and bacon and beans.

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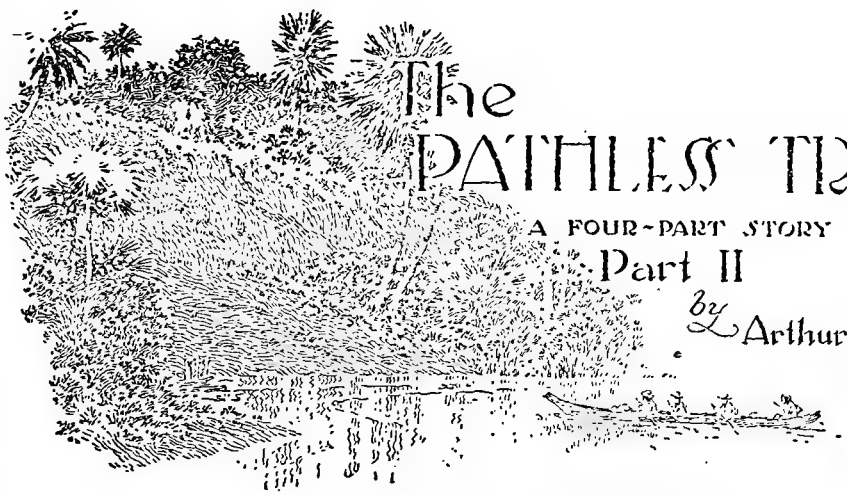

The PATHLESS TRAIL

A FOUR-PART STORY

Part II

By Arthur O. Friel

Author of "The Trumpeter," "Wild Women," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form

THREE ex-Army men, Roderick McKay, Meredith Knowlton and Timothy Ryan, arrived in Brazil to undertake a hazardous search for a certain David Dawson Rand. There had been a report that the man they were looking for was held captive by a tribe of cannibals called the Red Bones.

The result of various inquiries in the town of Remate de Males—where they had landed—made them decide to start at once up the river Javary for the Interior. They set about their preparations, and enlisted the aid of the *superintendente* of the town and also of a Herr Schwandorf who was said to know the country well.

From the beginning the behavior of the German was peculiar, and the three Americans were put on their guard. He secured a boat for them, however, and Peruvian paddlers—with whom it soon appeared they would have trouble.

After an uneventful trip of fifteen days the party met a canoe manned by Brazilian rubber-workers. At once a quarrel sprang up between the crews of the two boats, and Knowlton came to blows with Francisco, one of his paddlers, before it could be stopped.

Several nights later while the camp slept, Francisco, knife in hand, attempted to murder Knowlton. The assailant was caught in time; but immediately a general fight with the Peruvians broke out. Only Jose, the *puntero*, remained faithful.

Meantime back in Iquitos, Schwandorf telegraphed to the American agents of the searching expedition that its members had all been murdered.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOUBLE-CROSS

NOON; sweltering hot. A blazing sun pouring vertical rays down on a blinding river. A long canoe wearily creeping up the glaring waters, minus a lookout, heedless of the ever-present danger of sunken tree-trunks; propelled by three sun-blistered white men, one of whom wore a bandage around his head; steered perfunctorily by a pallid pirate whose left arm hung in a sling. Atop the right bank, an unbroken, endless tangle of jungle-growth. Ahead, on the left shore, a gap gouged out of the forest and a number of boats at the water's edge.

"Guess that's it," panted Knowlton, shielding his eyes and squinting at the clearing. "One more day's journey, the Brazilian chap said. We've been two-and-a-half."

"One day's journey for six hardened rivermen, *señor*," corrected Jose. "Not for three men doing six men's work and hampered by a cripple."

"Aw, ye're no crip, Hozy," dissented Tim. "Any guy that can steer a tub like this here one-handed after losin' a couple gallons o' juice is in good shape yet, I'll say. If ye had both legs shot off and yer arms broke and yer head stove in, ye might call yerself sort o' helpless. Ease her over to the left a li'l more, so's we'll hit the bank right at the corner o' that gap. Me, I don't want to take one stroke more'n I have to. Every muscle in me is so sore it squeaks."

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"Same here," admitted Knowlton, "I'm one solid ache."

Jose nodded. The clumsy craft veered a bit. The three put a little more punch into their lagging strokes, noting, as they neared the steep bank, that a couple of men had appeared at its top and were staring at them. Gradually the long dugout worked in to the muddy shore where the paddlers stabbed their blades into the clay and held it firm.

"Ahoy, up there! This the Nunes *seringal?*"

From the edge, some thirty feet above, the taller of the two watchers answered.

"*Si, senhor.* The headquarters of the *coronel.* Do you come to visit him?"

"Right."

"Then permit me to help you. The path is a little ahead. Pull up and tie to this stake."

The tall fellow came dropping swiftly downward. At the same time the other Brazilian stepped back and was gone.

With a dexterous twist the man of Nunes moored the boat to the designated stake. Then he reached a hand toward Tim to help him out.

"I ain't no old woman, feller," Tim refused, and hopped aground unassisted.

McKay and Knowlton followed. But Jose, after moving languidly forward and contemplating the sharp slope, hesitated and then shrugged his shoulders.

"I am tired, *señores,*" he said. "And perhaps it would be well for one to stay and watch."

The tall Brazilian's eyes narrowed.

"There is no danger of loss," he asserted with dignity. "We men of the *coronel* are not thieves."

The slight emphasis of his last sentence might have been taken as an intimation that some one else not far away would bear watching. Jose's mouth tightened. For a moment Brazilian and Peruvian eyed each other in obvious dislike. Then, with a glance at his crippled arm, Jose shrugged again.

"Better come along, Jose," McKay said. "Stuff's safe enough."

"As you will, *capitan.*"

He lounged to the edge, hesitated, wavered slightly. At once the Brazilian darted out a hand and gave him support. And while the four clambered up the slope he retained a grip on the Peruvian's arm, aiding him to the top. When they emerged on the level, however, he dropped his hand immediately. Jose gave him a half-mocking bow of thanks, to which he replied with a short nod. Then he stepped back and let the Peruvian precede him toward a number of substantial pole-supported houses a hundred yards away.

"No love lost between them two," thought Tim, who had watched it all. "Good skate, though, this new feller. Ready to help a guy that needs it, whether he likes him or not; ready to knock his block off too, if he needs that. Bet he'd be a hellion in a scrap. Dang good-lookin' lad, too."

Wherewith he introduced himself.

"Don't git sore because I growled at ye down below," he said with a friendly grin. "Sounded rough, mebbe, but that's my style. I'm Tim Ryan, from the States. I bark more'n I bite."

The overture met with instant response—a quick smile and a twinkle in the warm eyes.

"It is not words that give offense, *senhor,* but the way they are spoken—and the man who speaks them. One man may growl, but you like him. Another may speak smoothly but you itch to strike him. Is it not so? I am Pedro Andrada, a *seringueiro* who should be tapping trees instead of loafing here. But my partner and I have just come in from a long trip into the *sertao* —wilderness—and are resting."

"Yeah? Was that yer buddy I seen with ye?"

"My—ah—buddee? Partner? Yes, that was he—Lourenço Moraes, the best comrade one ever had. He has gone to tell the coronel of your arrival. Have you met with an accident down-river?"

He moved a thumb meaningly toward the only remaining member of the crew.

"Yeah," grimly. "Bad accident."

Tim tapped his pistol significantly, raised five fingers, winked and twitched his head toward the Peruvian. Pedro lifted his brows, nodded quick understanding, pointed to the bad arm of Jose, and made motions as if pulling a trigger.

Tim shook his head and enacted the pantomime of drawing and throwing a knife. Whereat the Brazilian, aware that Jose was not a prisoner and probably knowing that North Americans were not knife-throwers, looked much puzzled. But their sign-manual went no farther, for they now approached the house which evidently formed the dwelling and office of Coronel Nunes.

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AT THE foot of the ladder stood a broad-shouldered, square-jawed, thick-muscled, deeply tanned man who, without speaking, pointed a thumb upward. Above, in the doorway, waited an elderly Brazilian of medium height and spare figure, standing with soldierly erectness and garbed in white duck of semi-military cut. He beamed down at McKay and Knowlton, but as his black eyes encountered those of Jose they seemed suddenly to become very sharp. Then his gaze rested on Tim's broad face and he smiled again.

"Enter, gentlemen," he invited. "*Esta casae a suas ordenes*—this house is at your disposal."

McKay, with a bow, climbed the ladder, followed by Knowlton. Jose, with a swaggering stare at the wide-shouldered man, who stared straight back without facial change, also went up. Tim came fourth and last; for Pedro stopped beside his countryman, who evidently was Lourenço.

The travelers found themselves in a room which, in view of its distance from civilization, seemed palatial. Its floor was tight, its furniture modern, its walls decorated with a few excellent pictures, of which the largest was a superb view of the rugged harbor of Rio de Janeiro. Comfortable chairs were ranged along the walls and the middle of the room was occupied by a massive square-cornered table on which lay a jumble of hand-written business papers, a number of books, a high-grade violin and bow.

Beyond the table stood a swivel-chair, evidently the usual seat of the *coronel*. Table and chair were so arranged that the master of this house sat always with his back to a wall and his face toward the door. And on a couple of hooks on that wall, ready for instant service, hung a high-power rifle.

On their way up the river the Americans had passed, at long intervals, a few small rubber-estates, whose headquarters consisted mainly of a crude shack or two, hardly better than the dingy houses of Remate de Males. This place was more imposing. They had observed, while crossing the cleared space, that it was at least half a mile square; that its warehouse for supplies was big and solid; that a goodly number of *barracaos*, or rubber-workers' huts, surrounded the house of the master at a respectful distance; and that the owner's home was no one-room cabin but big enough to contain six or eight rooms.

This well-appointed reception-room and the formal yet sincere courtesy of its owner showed that Coronel Nunes was no mere native of the frontier. Later they were to learn that he was a gentleman of Rio, who, exiling himself from the capital after the death of his wife, had carved from this forbidding jungle a fortune in the rubber trade.

With the correct touch of Latin punctilio McKay spoke the introductions and stated that they were on their way up-river to explore the hinterland. With equal politeness the *coronel* bowed and begged his illustrious guests to be seated. Then he touched a small bell. A door at one side opened and a white-suited negro appeared.

"*Café*," the *coronel* ordered.

As speedily as if these visitors had been long expected, the servant brought in a tray bearing cups of sirupy coffee. Each of the guests accepted one. Whereafter the decorum of the occasion was shattered by Tim, who, at the imminent risk of scalding himself, gulped his refreshment and vociferated his satisfaction.

"O-o-oh boy! That hits me right where I live! Gimme another one, feller, and make it man's-size!"

The black fellow struggled with his quick mirth and then laughed outright—the throaty, infectious laugh of his race. The *coronel's* eyes twinkled. And when Tim fished a damp cigaret from his shirt, nonchalantly scraped a match on his host's table, blew a cloud of smoke and sprawled back with one leg dangling over a chair-arm, formality went a-glimmering.

"*A quem madruga Deus ajuda*," laughed the *coronel*. "Or, as you North Americans put it, 'God helps those who help themselves.' Let us not be ceremonious, gentlemen. 'Tonio, bring more coffee. And cigars. And——"

Down behind his table, where only the servant saw the motion, he twitched a finger as if pulling a cork. 'Tonio, his ebony countenance split by a grin, ducked his head and vanished into the other room.

"How is the rubber market, sir?" asked Knowlton, seeking to divert attention from Tim.

"Not so good," the old gentleman replied with a deprecatory gesture. "In truth, it is very poor since the war—so poor that soon I shall abandon this *seringal* and go out to spend the rest of my life on the coast. With rubber selling at a mere five hundred dollars a ton in New York and the artificial

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plantations of the Far East growing greater yearly, there is no longer much profit in bleeding the wild trees of our jungle. I really do not know why I stay here now, unless it is because I have become so much accustomed to this life."

"Why, I understood that there was much money in rubber."

"You speak truth—there was. Now there is not. The world moves and times change. Years ago foreigners came into Brazil, helped themselves to the seed of our wild trees, and planted it in Ceylon and the Malay region. That seed now bears such fruit that the world is flooded with rubber. Ten years ago, *senhores*, a ton sold for six thousand five hundred dollars. Now in this year 1920, the price is only one-thirteenth of what it was in those days. It scarcely pays for the gathering. I hope you have not come expecting to make fortunes in rubber."

"No. We are here to find a race of men known as Red Bones."

THE *coronel's* brows lifted. They kept on lifting and he opened his lips twice without speaking. After a long stare at Knowlton he looked at McKay, at Tim and finally at Jose. A frown grew on his face. And the Americans, following his look at the Peruvian, were surprized to see that Jose himself was staring blankly at the speaker.

"Jose Martinez!" snapped the *coronel*, leveling a finger pistol-like at the *puntero*. "What devil's game are you working now?"

Jose recovered himself and lifted his coffee-cup.

"I do not understand you, Nunes," he replied languidly. "I am but the humble *puntero* of the crew engaged by these *señores*. My only work has been to earn my pay. And you may ask *el capitan* whether I have earned it."

"Aye, he has," corroborated McKay. "Killed two of his own crew in our defense."

The *coronel's* jaw dropped. He blinked as if disbelieving his ears.

"He—Jose—not possible!" he stuttered. "Jose—this man—defended you against his companions?"

"Exactly."

The Brazilian slowly shook his head. Then suddenly he nodded as if an illuminating thought had crossed his mind.

"I see. Jose is very well paid."

"One dollar a day," was McKay's dry retort.

At that moment 'Tonio reentered with a larger tray than before, bearing more coffee, long cigars and squat glassess in which glowed a golden liquid. Tim sat up with a grunt and helped himself with both hands. When the *coronel's* turn came he disregarded the drinks but lighted the cigar as if he needed it.

"*De noite todos os gatos sao pardos*," he said. "At night all cats are gray. I am much in the dark, gentlemen. If you would be so good as to enlighten me——"

He paused, looking sidewise again at Jose as if the *puntero* had suddenly grown wings or horns.

"All right," nodded Knowlton, biting and lighting his cigar. "We are somewhat in the dark ourselves as to why Jose has been so zealous, for he has been very taciturn since the recent fight at our camp. Perhaps Jose also is a bit hazy about our expedition. He looked rather surprized just now. So here is the situation."

Briefly then he outlined the object of the search, stating that the identity of the mysterious Raposa was a matter of some concern to certain persons in the United States and that the expedition had been formed with the view of settling the question. From the time of the landing at Remate de Males, however, he narrated events more fully, giving complete details of Schwandorf's activities, Francisco's offense and the final attack by the crew. While he talked the *coronel's* frown deepened. Also, Jose gradually assumed the expression of a thunder-cloud. And when the tale was done the *puntero* exploded.

"*Sangre de Cristo!*" he yelled. "*El Aleman*—the German—he told you we would go among the cannibals? We? Peruvians? *Madre de Dios!* If ever I get within knife-length of him! Nunes, you see, do you not?"

The *coronel* nodded grimly.

"I see that he planned to have all of you destroyed. Senhor Knowlton, that black-bearded and black-hearted man suggested that you take Mayoruna women? He told you they were shapely of body and tried to put into your minds the thought of making them your paramours? The snake!

"He did not tell you, then, that the Mayoruna men allow no trifling with their women; that any alien man attempting to

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embrace one of them would be killed. But it is true. If you should succeed in establishing friendly relations with the men—which is not at all likely—you would forfeit all friendship, and your lives as well, by the slightest dalliance with any of the women.

"He told you that more than one man has risked his life to win a Mayoruna woman? That is true. But he gave you a false impression as to the way in which the risk was incurred. He did not tell you that Peruvian *caucheros* have sometimes raided small isolated *malocas* of the Mayorunas, shooting down the men and carrying off the girls to be victims of their bestial lust. He did not tell you that for this reason any Peruvian is considered their enemy and is killed without mercy wherever found. Yet he tried to send you with Peruvian guides into their country. He knew the Peruvians would be killed on sight—and you with them."

CHAPTER IX.

FIDDLERS THREE

BLACK looks passed among the men as the duplicity of Schwandorf lay plain before their eyes. Tim growled. Jose hissed curses. The coronel whirled to him.

"Jose! What was his object in trying to destroy you and your crew? You have been his man. You know much about him. He wanted to stop your mouth, yes? Dead men tell no tales."

The *puntero's* eyes glittered. For a moment the others thought he was about to reveal important secrets. Then his face changed.

"I know no reason why we should be killed," he declared.

"I do not believe you," the *coronel* declared bluntly.

Jose shrugged, calmly drank the *coronel's* wine, lighted the *coronel's* cigar, leaned back in the *coronel's* chair and eyed the *coronel* with imperturbable insolence.

"See here, Jose," demanded McKay, "you've had something up your sleeve all along. Now come clean! What is it?"

Jose puffed airily at the cigar, saying nothing.

"What orders did Schwandorf give you?"

This time the reply came readily enough.

"To take you twenty-four days up the river and put you ashore. To prevent any trouble before that time."

"Ah. And after that?"

"Nothing. At least, nothing to me. What may have been said to the other men I do not know. Schwandorf came to me last, after he had picked all the others."

"And what do you know about Schwandorf?"

"What is between me and Schwandorf will be settled between me and Schwandorf. My duty to you *señores* lies only in handling the crew. Now that there is no crew my duty ends. Also, *capitan*, I would like my pay now."

"You quit?"

"Why not? I have done my best. I can do no more. I am crippled. I am of no further use to you. Give me my pay, a little food, a small canoe, and I go."

"It is possible, Senhor Jose," spoke the *coronel* with ironic politeness, "that you may not go so soon. You have killed two men recently. You refuse to reveal some things which should be known about the German. Perhaps the law——"

Jose burst into a jeering laugh.

"Law? You speak of law? There is no law up this river but the law of the gun and the knife. And if there were, *señor*, what then? I killed in fair fight. I killed men who would do murder. I killed on the west bank of the river—Peru. Neither you nor any other Brazilian can lay hand on me. And though I now have only one good arm, it will not be well for any one to try to hold me. My knife and my right hand still are ready."

"By cripes, the lad's right," Tim blurted impulsively. "And I'll tell the world I'm for him. He's got a right to keep his mouth shut if he wants to. He don't owe us nothin'. Mebbe he's got somethin' up his sleeve, at that; but he stuck with us in the pinch, and——"

"And we'll give him a square deal, of course," Knowlton cut in. "Jose, your own wages to this point, at a dollar a day, are eighteen dollars. The wages of the five other men to the place where they—quit—would aggregate seventy-five dollars. Grand total, ninety-three. The others chose to take their pay in lead instead of gold, so their account is closed. Therefore I suggest that their pay go to you as *puntero*, *popero*, and good sport. What say, Rod?"

"Make it a hundred flat," McKay agreed.

"Right. A hundred in gold. Satisfy you, Jose?"

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"Indeed yes, *señor.* I did not expect such generosity."

"That's all right, then. We'll fix you up before we move on, and— Say! Are you in Schwandorf's pay too?"

Jose hesitated. Then he replied:

"Since you mention it, I will admit that *el Aleman* offered me certain inducements to make this journey. I now see that he had no intention of meeting his promises. But you can leave it to me to collect from him whatever may be due."

Even the *coronel* nodded at this. The gleam in the Peruvian's eyes presaged unpleasantness for Schwandorf.

"You gentlemen of course will not attempt to continue your journey for the present," the *coronel* suggested. "You are fatigued and I shall greatly appreciate the pleasure of your companionship. New arrangements also will be necessary in the matter of a boat and men."

"We've been wondering about getting another boat and a new crew," Knowlton said frankly. "The canoe we have is too big for three men to handle, and I'll admit we're tired. Jose too is in no shape to travel yet——"

"Jose, of course, is my guest also," the old gentleman interrupted. "The question of new men can be solved. But there is time for everything, and now is the time for all of you to rest. As our proverb has it, *devagar se vae ao longe*—he goes far who goes slowly."

McKay arose, glass in hand.

"To our host," he bowed. The toast was drunk standing.

Whereafter the host tapped the bell twice and 'Tonio appeared with a tray of fresh glasses. A toast to the United States by the *coronel* followed, and as soon as the black man arrived with a third round the Republic of Brazil was pledged. Then the *coronel* directed the servant:

"'Tonio, if Pedro and Lourenço are outside ask them to move the belongings of the gentlemen from the canoe. And make ready rooms for the guests."

'TONIO disappeared down the ladder. The *coronel* raised the violin, tendered it to the others, accepted their pleas to play it himself, and for the next half-hour acquitted himself with no mean ability. Snatches of long-forgotten operas and improvisations of his own flowed from the strings in smooth harmony, hinting at bygone years amid far different surroundings for which his soul now hungered and to which he would return.

Pedro and Lourenço, transporting the equipment, passed in and out soft-footed and almost unnoticed. At length the player, with a deprecatory smile and a half-apology for "boring his guests," extended the instrument again toward the visitors. And McKay, silent McKay, took it.

Sweet and low, out welled the haunting melody of "Annie Laurie." Tim, who had listened with casual interest to the *coronel's* music, now grinned happily. And when the plaintive Scotch song became "Kathleen Mavourneen" he closed his eyes and lay back in pure enjoyment. "The River Shannon" flowed into "The Swanee River," and this in turn blended into other heart-tugging airs of Dixieland. When the last strain died and the captain reached for his half-smoked cigar the room was silent for minutes.

Then, to the astonishment of all, Jose spoke.

"*Señores*, there was a time when I too could draw music from the violin. If I may—" His eyes rested longingly on the instrument.

"*Certamente*, if you can use the arm," the *coronel* acquiesced. With a little difficulty Jose drew his arm from the sling, balanced his left elbow on the chair-arm, and poised the violin. A half-smile showed in the eyes of the *coronel* as he glanced at his guests. He, and they as well, expected a discordant, uncouth attempt to scrape out some obscene ditty of the frontier.

But as Jose, after jockeying a bit, began drifting the bow across the strings, the suppressed smile faded and eyes opened. Here was a man who, as he said, once could play. And he wasted no time on airs composed by others and known to half the world. Under his touch the mellow wood began to talk, and in the minds of the listeners grew pictures.

City streets, blank-walled houses, *patios*, the rattle of the hoofs of burros over cobbles, the shuffle of human feet, the toll of bells from a convent tower. Gay little bits of music, laughter, flashing eyes, a voluptuous love-song repeated over and over. A sudden wild outbreak, fighting men, shots, the clash of steel—again a tolling bell and a requiem for the dead.

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A horse galloping in the night. Mountain winds crooning mournfully, rising to the scream of tempest and the crash of thunder. Dreary uplands, the hiss of rain, the sough of drifting snow, the patient plod of a mule along a perilous trail. And then the jungle —its discordant uproar, its hammering of frogs, its hoots and howls, the dismal swash of flood-waters. A monotonous ebb and flow of life, punctuated by sudden flares of fight. Then a long, mournful wail—and silence.

His bow still on the strings, Jose sat for a minute like a stone image, his eyes straight ahead, his pale face drawn, his red kerchief glowing dully in the semi-shadow like a cap of blood. For once his face was empty of all insolence, changed by a pathetic wistfulness that made it tragic. Then, wordless, he lowered the violin, held it out to the *coronel*, fumbled absently at his sling, and slowly encased his wounded arm. When he looked up his old mocking expression had come back and he once more looked the reckless buccaneer.

For a time no one spoke. Each felt that he had glimpsed something of this man's past; felt too that he who now was a bloody-handed borderer had once been a *caballero*, moving in a much higher circle. Certainly he could not play like this unless he had been of the upper class in his youth. The *coronel's* face was thoughtful as he took back the violin. When at length he began to talk, however, it was on a topic as remote as possible from music and present personalities—the reconstruction of Europe as the result of the world war.

With this and kindred subjects, aided by the attentive ministrations of 'Tonio, the afternoon passed swiftly. Dinner proved a feast, the *pièce de resistance* being tender, well-cooked meat which the Americans took for roast beef but which really was roast tapir. More cigars, coupled with the fatigue of the past two days of paddling, eventually caused the visitors to seek their rooms, where McKay and Knowlton paired off and Tim took Jose as his "bunkie."

When Tim awoke the next morning he found himself deserted.

To Knowlton, who drew from the small gold-chest the hundred dollars allotted to Jose and handed it to him before redressing his wound, the *puntero* quietly revealed his intention to go before sunrise.

"Say nothing, *señor*," he requested. "You need know nothing of it, if you like. I am here tonight—I am gone tomorrow—that is all. I am of no further use to you, I am unwelcome in this house of Nunes, and I go. Oh, have no fear for me—I have my gun, my knife and my good right arm, and I can take care of myself very well. No doubt the *coronel* will be astonished to find that on leaving tonight I have neither cut any one's throat nor stolen anything—ha!

"I have a black name on this river and it is well earned, perhaps. Yet few men are as bad as those who dislike them think they are. I may borrow a small canoe, but any Indian would do the same. An unoccupied canoe is any man's property.

"Before our ways part, *señor*, let me say that as Jose Martinez never forgets his enemies, so he never forgets friends. Where some men would have turned me loose like a sick dog with my eighteen dollars, you and Señor McKay give me a hundred. And far more than that, you saved my life at a time when many men would have said, 'Bah, let the bloody one die! He is nothing but scum of the border and leader of that murdering crew.' You had only to let me lie a few minutes longer, and you would be rid of me. No, Jose does not forget.

"That is all, except— If you will in parting take the hand of a man known as a killer and other things——"

Knowlton gripped that hand with swift heartiness. He would have protested against such a departure, but the other's steady gaze betokened inflexible purpose. So he merely said:

"Then good luck, old chap! And if you meet Schwandorf give him our affectionate regards."

"*Si, señor*," was the sardonic answer. "I will do that thing. And here is something that may be of interest to you. I happen to know that before we left Remate de Males a swift one-man canoe left Nazareth, and that the man in it was an Indian who is in the German's control. It went up-stream while we were loading your supplies, and it has not returned. By this time it must be many hours above this place. I do not know what message that Indian carries nor where he goes. But he is a short man and his left leg is crooked. If you meet such a one, make him talk. Good night, *señor*."

Just how and when the *puntero* cat-footed his way out that night none ever knew but himself. But before the next dawn he had vanished from the Peruvian shore.

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CHAPTER X

BY THE LIGHT OF STORM

"ONE thing I can't understand," Knowlton said, toying with his coffee-cup the next morning, "is why Schwandorf should double-cross us. We never did anything to him. Another thing I don't quite get is how he expected to have the Peruvians wiped out when he knew blamed well they were aware of the enmity of the cannibals. They'd hardly be likely to go into the bush with us under those circumstances."

"My guess is this," McKay replied. "He set a trap. He is on friendly footing with some of the savages above here, no doubt. He dispatched that Indian messenger to stir them up with some false tale and bring them to some place where they'd be pretty sure to get us. He primed the crew to jump us at the same place, perhaps. Then the crew would kill us or we'd kill them, and whichever side won would be smeared by the Indians. Sort of a trap within a trap. Why he did it doesn't matter much. He double-crossed us; he double-crossed the crew; he double-crossed Jose. First thing he knows he'll find he's double-crossed himself."

"Yeah," Tim grunted. "He better beat it before we git back!"

"He wanted no killing before we reached the cannibal country," McKay went on, "because then it would all be blamed on the savages and he could show clean hands. Francisco's vengefulness tipped over his cart."

"Still, he might have known we'd stop here for a call on the *coronel*, and that there was a big chance for us to be warned here about the feud between Mayorunas and Peruvians."

"That probably was provided for. Crew doubtless had orders to prevent any such visit by lying or in other ways. We probably would have gone surging past here at top speed."

"Wal, it don't git us nothin' to talk about things that ain't happened," interposed the practical Tim. "Question is, where do we go from here? And how?"

All eyes went to the *coronel*, who sat languidly smoking his morning cigar.

"Coronel, we are in your hands," McKay said bluntly. "Your men, I presume, are out at work in various parts of the bush. We want a crew and, if possible, guides. Can you help us?"

The *coronel* flicked off an ash and spoke slowly.

"I have two men, *senhores*, who have no peers as bushmen. They are the two whom you saw yesterday. Frankly, they are most valuable to me and I hesitate about sending them on so dangerous a mission as yours. Yet they might succeed where most men would fail, for they have repeatedly gone into the bush on risky journeys and returned unharmed. Their adventures would fill books.

"The older of these two, Lourenço Moraes, has been more than once among the cannibals of this region, and so he knows something of them. Naturally he did not live long among them; he left them as soon as he could. But he has the faculty of extricating himself from hopeless positions—or perhaps it would be better to say that his cool head and good fortune together have preserved him thus far. *Tanta vez vae o cantaro á fonte até que um dia lá fica*—the pitcher may go often to the spring, but some day it remains there.

"Pedro Andrada, the younger, is not so steady and cool-headed as Lourenço. Yet he is a most capable man, and the two together—they are always together—make a very efficient team."

"I bet they do," Tim concurred heartily. "I like that Pedro lad fine."

"So do I," the *coronel* smiled. "Now, gentlemen, I will not order these men to go with you. If they go it must be of their own choice. They have only recently returned from a hazardous mission and they are entitled to rest. Yet I have little doubt that they will jump at the chance to risk their lives in a new venture. If they choose to go, I suggest that you place yourselves entirely in their hands and give them free rein. You would look far for better men."

"And we're lucky to get them," Knowlton acquiesced. "To them, and to you, we shall be greatly indebted."

"Not to me, *senhor*," the *coronel* demurred. "I do nothing but bring you men together. Theirs is the risk. 'Tonio! Find Pedro and Lourenço. Shall we go into the office, gentlemen?"

Chairs scraped back and an exodus from the dining-room ensued. Outside the lusty voice of the negro bawled. Soon he was back, and at his heels strode the lithe Pedro

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and the quiet Lourenço. They ran their eyes over the group, then stood looking inquiringly at their employer.

"Be seated, men. Roll cigarets if you like," said the *coronel*. Coolly they did both. Pedro, catching Tim's friendly grin, flashed a quick smile in return. Lourenço, unsmiling, looked squarely into each man's face in turn and seemed satisfied with what he saw. Both then glanced around as if missing some one.

"Your friend Jose has left us," the *coronel* informed them dryly, interpreting the look. "He disappeared in the night."

"Ah. That is why one of our canoes is gone," said Pedro. "We are ready to start."

"You mistake," the old gentleman laughed. "We do not want him back. Nothing else is missing."

Whereat Pedro looked slightly surprized. Lourenço's lips curved in a faint grin. Neither made any further comment.

The *coronel* plunged at once into the business for which they had been summoned. Succinctly he stated the purpose of the North Americans in coming here, pointed out their need of guides—and stopped there. He said nothing of the dangers ahead, mentioned no reward; did not even ask the men whether they would go. He merely lighted a fresh cigar and leaned back in his chair.

A SILENCE followed. Again Lourenço looked searchingly into the face of each American. Pedro contemplated the opposite wall, taking occasional puffs from his cigaret. At length Knowlton suggested tentatively—

"We will pay well——"

Both the bushmen frowned. The *coronel* spoke in a tone of mild reproof.

"*Senhor*, it is not a matter of pay. These men can make plenty of money as *seringueiros*."

"Pardon," said Knowlton, and thereafter held his tongue.

Deliberately Lourenço finished his smoke, pinched the coal between a hard thumb and forefinger, and spoke for the first time.

"May I ask, *senhor*, if you are the commander?" His gaze rested on McKay.

"I am."

"And do I understand that we shall at all times be subject to your orders?"

"In case any orders are necessary—yes. But I assume that you will not need commands."

A quiet smile showed in the bushman's eyes. He glanced at Pedro. The latter met the look from the corner of his eye, without wink, nod or other sign. But when Lourenço turned again to McKay he spoke as if all were arranged.

"When do we start, *capitao?*"

Tim slapped his leg and cackled.

"By cripes, there ain't no lost motion with these guys, hey, cap? Over the top and give 'em ——. That's us!"

McKay smiled approvingly.

"We shall get on together," he said. "Lourenço and Pedro, this is not a one-man party. We are three comrades, who now become five. If at any time one man needs to command, I, as senior officer, will take that command. Otherwise we are all on an equal footing."

"Just so," Lourenço agreed. "If it were otherwise you would still be three men—not five. Since that is plain, let me say frankly that your big canoe had best stay here, also everything you do not need in the bush. Two light canoes are faster, easier to handle and to hide. Pedro and I have our own canoe and will provide our own supplies. We will pick out a three-man boat for you and load it with what you select from your equipment. After that every man swings his own paddle."

"*Cada qual por si e Deus por todos.* Each for himself and God for us all," Pedro summarized.

"That's the dope," applauded Tim. "Now say, Renzo old feller, what d'ye know about these here, now, Red Bones up above here? And have ye got anything on that Raposy guy?"

Lourenço shook his head.

"I know little of the Red Bone people, for I have never met them. That is one reason why I now should like to meet them. I have heard of them, yes; and the things I have heard are not pleasant. Yet it may be that the tales are worse than the people. I have also heard terrible stories of the light-skinned cannibals, the Mayorunas; yet I have been among the cannibals and found them not so bad—though it is true that they eat the flesh of their enemies. I have seen it done. But it makes a very great difference how they are approached and who the men are who approach them. It is possible that we may go unharmed among

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even *os Ossos Vermelhos*—the Red Bones. We shall see.

"Of the Raposa I think I do know something. I have seen him."

Every one except Pedro sat up with a start.

"You have seen him?" exclaimed the *coronel*. "When? Where? How? Why have you not spoke of it?"

"Because, *coronel*, I forgot it until now. It meant nothing to us—yes, Pedro was with me—except that it was one more queer thing in the bush. In time I might have remembered it and told you. But you know we have been busy."

"True. But go on."

"It was only a little time ago. We were returning from the scouting trip on which you sent us to locate new rubber-trees. We were seven—eight—seven——"

"Eight days' journey from here," prompted Pedro.

"*Si*. We were in our canoe when a sudden storm broke and we got ashore to wait until it was over. The place was on an *ygarapé*—a creek—about two days away from the river. The trees were large and the ground free from bush. In a flash of lightning we saw a man peering out at us from a hollow tree.

"He was naked and streaked with paint—that was all we saw in the flashes that came and went. The rain was heavy and we stayed where we were until it ended. Then we ordered that man to come out.

"He came and he held bow and arrow ready to shoot. We too were ready to shoot, but we held back our bullets and he held back his arrow. We saw that his paint was red and that it traced his bones; that his skin was that of a tanned white man and his hair was dark with a white streak over one ear. No, we did not notice the color of his eyes—the light was not good and he stood well away from us.

"We looked around for other men, but saw none. We asked him who he was and what he wanted, but he gave no answer. He looked at us for a long time, and we at him. Then he began walking away sidewise, watching us steadily, holding his arrow always ready. Finally he disappeared among the trees, and we saw him no more. But we heard him, *senhores*—twice before we lost sight of him he spoke out in a queer voice like that of a parrot. And the thing he said was—'Poor Davey!'"

McKay thumped a fist on his chair.

"Davey! David Rand!"

"Perhaps so, *capitao*. I do not know. But he spoke English."

"By thunder, David Rand! Merry, where's that picture?"

Knowlton was already unbuttoning his pocket-flap. Quickly he produced the photograph.

"That the fellow?"

Lourenço studied the face. The eagerly anticipated affirmative did not come.

"I can not say surely. This is a full-faced clean-shaven man with hair close-trimmed. That one's face was gaunt, covered partly with beard and partly by long hair, and we were not close to him, as I have said. I would not say the two were the same until I could have a better look at the wild man."

"You didn't follow him?"

"No. Why should we? He had done nothing to us and we let him go his way. We did look at his hollow tree, though. But it was only an empty tree, not his home; a place where he had stepped in out of the storm. We had other things to do, so we got into our canoe again and paddled off."

"You can find the place again?"

"Yes. But I much doubt if we shall find him there."

"Never mind. We've something to start with now, and that's worth a lot. Get busy with your boats and supplies, boys, right away. Tim and Merry, let's dig out our essentials and start. We're on a hot trail at last. Let's go!"

CHAPTER XI

OUT OF THE AIR

AGAIN the sun fought the mists of a new day, casting a pallid, watery light on the livid green roof of the limitless jungle. High up under that roof, more than a hundred feet above the ground, the morning alarm clock went off with a scream—the sudden chorus of monkeys and macaws awaking after a few hours of silence. Down on the eastern shore of the river, in a little natural port where the shadows still lay thick, men stirred under their black mosquito-nets, yawned, and waited for more light before starting another day's journey.

To three of the five men housed under those flimsy coverings the somber hue of

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their nets was new. On leaving Remate de Males the insect-bars had been clean white; and though they had grown somewhat soiled from daily handling, they never had approached the drab dinginess of the barriers draping the hammocks of the Peruvian river-men. In fact, their owners had been at some pains to keep them as clean as possible, folding them each morning with military precision and stowing them carefully. Wherefore they were somewhat taken aback when informed that nice white nets were decidedly not the thing in this part of the world.

"Up to this place, *senhores*, they have done no harm," Pedro said before leaving the *coronel's* grounds. "But from here on they will not do at all. The weakest moonlight—yes, even starlight—would make them stand out in the darkness like tombstones. A few days more and we shall be in the cannibal country. And it is an old trick of those eaters of men to skulk along the shore by night, watching a camp until all are asleep, and then sneak up with spears ready.

"A rush and a swift stab of the spears into those white nets, and you are dead or dying from the poisoned points. I would no more sleep under a white net than I would lie in my hammock and blow a horn to show where I was. Your light nets must stay here. We will find dark ones for you."

Thus the voyagers learned another of those little things on which sometimes hinge life or death. Even McKay, with his experience of other jungles, had never thought it necessary to drape himself in invisibility at night. But when his attention was called to it he recognized its value at once and the white nets were forthwith abandoned.

Now, on the first morning out from the Nunes place, the three Americans stretched themselves in lazy enjoyment after a night passed without a sentinel. The stretching evoked sundry grunts due to the discovery that their muscles still were lame. The long steamer journey from their own land, followed by the daily confinement of the Peruvian canoe, had afforded scant opportunity for keeping themselves fit, and the sudden necessity for doing their own paddling had found every man soft. But they now were hardening fast, and the steady swing of the paddles was proving a physical joy. These were men ill accustomed to sitting in enforced idleness for weeks on end.

Matches flared under the nets and cigaret-smoke drifted into the air, rousing to fresh activity the mosquitoes humming hungrily outside. Gradually the shadows paled and the weak light reflecting from the fog-shrouded water beyond grew into day. The nets lifted and the bloodthirsty insects swooped in vicious triumph on the emerging men. But again matches blazed, flame licked up among kindlings, a fire grew, and in its smoke-screen the voyagers found some surcease from the bug hordes. Soon the fragrance of coffee floated into the air.

Tim yawned, coughed explosively and swore.

"Feller can't even take a gape for himself without gittin' these —— bugs down his throat," he complained and coughed again. "Gimme some coffee! I got one skeeter the size of a devil's darnin'-needle stuck in me windpipe."

"A devil's darning-needle? What is that, Senhor Tim?" inquired Pedro, passing him a cup of hot coffee. When the liquid—and the "skeeter"—had passed into Tim's stomach he enlightened the inquirer.

"Ye dunno what's a devil's darnin'-needle? Gosh, I'm s'prized at ye. I seen lots of 'em right on this here river. He's a bug about so long—" he stuck out a finger "—and he's got jaws like a crab and a long limber tail with a reg'lar needle in the end, and inside him is a roll o' tough silk—tough as spider-web. And he's death on liars. Any time a feller tells a lie he's got to look out, or all to oncet one o' them bugs'll come scootin' at him and grab him by the nose with them jaws. Then he'll curl up his tail—the bug I mean—and run his needle and thread right through the feller's lips and sew his mouth up tight. Then he flies off lookin' for another liar."

"*Por Deus!* And the liar starves to death?"

"Wal, no. O' course he can git somebody to cut the stitches. But the needle is a good thick one and it leaves a row o' holes all along the feller's lips. Any time ye see a guy with li'l round scars around his mouth, Pedro, ye'll know he told a lie sometime and the devil-bug got him."

McKay coughed. Knowlton blew his nose into a big handkerchief. Lourenço squinted sidewise at Tim, who was solemn as an owl. Pedro, his eyes twinkling, bent forward and scrutinized Tim's mouth.

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"You have been fortunate, *senhor*," he said simply, and stepped around to the other side of the fire.

"Huh? Say, lookit here, ye long-legged gorilla——"

Knowlton exploded. McKay and Lourenço snickered.

"It's on you, Tim!" vociferated Knowlton. "You dug the hole yourself. Now crawl in and pull it in after you."

Tim snorted wrathfully, but his eyes laughed.

"Aw, what's the use o' tryin to educate you guys?"

"You swallowed a mosquito just now, but I can not swallow that devil-bug," Pedro grinned.

Tim rumbled something, solaced himself with a cigaret, then squatted and joined the others in their frugal breakfast of coffee and *chibeh*—a handful of farinha mixed with water in a gourd. When it was finished McKay, who never smoked in the morning until he had eaten, filled a pipe and suggested:

"Guess we'd better plan our campaign. We didn't take time yesterday. In case we find no trace of the Raposa at the place where you fellows saw him, what's your idea?"

Lourenço, puffing thoughtfully, stared into the fire.

"There will be time enough to decide that, *capitao*, after we have visited that place," he said slowly. "Still perhaps it is best to make some plan. It can be changed at any time."

FOR a moment longer he looked at the dying flame. Then, dropping his cigaret-stub into it, he continued.

"If I were going alone to find a man among the Red Bones, I should go first to the Mayorunas and work through them to make sure of a friendly reception by the other people. I would——"

"Why, that's the very thing Schwandorf suggested."

"Yes? I have not heard what he said. Tell me."

McKay did so. Lourenço smiled.

"Sometimes, *capitao*, the devil puts into the hands of men a weapon which is turned against himself. So it is now. That *Allemao*, Schwandorf, never expected you to reach the people you seek, but the plan is good. It would not be good if you followed it exactly as he laid it out, but things have changed; and what you could not do with Peruvian companions, or alone, you perhaps can do with us. I will show you.

"It happens that I have been twice among the cannibals living in a certain *maloca* which I can find again. Perhaps you know that those people live in scattered *malocas* each ruled by its own chief——"

"Yes, we know about that."

"Good. Now if we went to any *maloca* where we were not known we might be killed at once. But at that *maloca* of which I speak I am known to the chief and all his fighting men, for I once led them on a raid into Peru. So they will remember me——"

"What's that?" Knowlton interrupted in amazement. "You led a cannibal tribe on the warpath?"

"Just so, *senhor*. It is a long story, but these are the facts:

"There was in Peru a gang of killers, robbers—and worse—who called themselves the Peccaries. They raided one of the *coronel's* camps where I was in charge, killed all my gang except myself and one other, and used us two as slaves and beasts of burden. The other man died from poison. I lived only to revenge myself on those foul outlaws. There was much rubber of the coronel, worth much money at that time, in the camp they had raided. So, after driving me like a beast to their stronghold in the hills of Peru, they came back with boats and Indian porters to get out that rubber.

"On that return journey I tried to kill the leader, who was called El Amarillo—yellow-skinned. I failed and he had me nailed with long thorns to a tree where I might hang in torment for days, dying slowly. See. Here are the marks."

All three of the Americans had noticed on the previous day that each of Lourenço's hands was disfigured by a scar which looked as if a spike had been driven through. Now he held those hands forward for their inspection. Then he pulled off his loose shirt and rolled up his trousers. They saw other scars in the big muscles before the arm-pits, in the soft flesh under the ribs, in the thighs and calves.

"The dirty Hun!" Tim grated.

"That was not all, Senhor Tim. They also put fire-ants on me, which bit so cruelly that I nearly lost my mind from pain.

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Then they went on, intending to have more sport with me when they came back with the rubber. But after they left me two hunters of the cannibal tribe who had been following a tapir's track found me and took me down from the tree.

"Now the Peccaries before this had stolen some women from a Mayoruna *maloca* and were treating them like dogs. I saw one of those women brutally murdered while I was a captive in the outlaw camp. I managed to tell the two hunters I could lead them to the Peccary stronghold and give them revenge. They carried me to their *maloca*—I could not walk—and told their chief what I had said. The chief caused my hurts to be cured and then I kept my promise. I guided the savages to the outlaw camp, they surrounded it, and in the fight that followed every Peccary was killed except the leader. Now that cannibal chief has not forgotten me——"

"Wait a minute," protested Knowlton. "Did that Peccary leader escape?"

"No. He was kept alive until a big herd of peccaries was met. Then, because he called himself 'King of the Peccaries', he was nailed to a tree, as I had been, and told to make the peccaries take out the thorns. The wild pigs tore him into ribbons with their tusks."

Calmly he donned his shirt again. Tim, staring at him, twitched his shoulders as if a chill had gone down his back.

"Ugh!" muttered Knowlton.

"So now," Lourenço resumed, "if I can find that chief again—he may have been killed in some tribal fight before now—he may be friendly to all of us. Or he may not. Savages cannot be relied on with much certainty. But if any of the Mayorunas will help us he will. It is worth trying."

"And if he is not friendly—" Knowlton paused.

"We do not come back," Pedro finished. "Have you a better plan?"

All shook their heads.

"Lourenço's idea is excellent," said McKay. "I was thinking along the same line, though I did not know he had any such friendly relations with a chief. That makes it all the more advisable to try it, unless we find the Raposa first. We of course will not land at the place where Schwandorf told us to go ashore, seven days from here."

"By no means," Lourenço concurred. "In five days we leave the river and travel along the *ygarapé*. If we go to the *maloca* it will be from another direction than the river."

He began preparing to travel. The others also went about the work of breaking camp. By the time the canoes were loaded the mists had lifted and the river lay open and empty before them. In the bush around and beyond, gloom still lay thick and the forest life yelped, howled, clattered and wailed. But out on the water it was broad day, and far overhead sounded the harsh cries of unseen parrots flying two by two in the sunlight above the matted branches. The world of the pathless tropic wilderness, ever dying, ever living, was about its daily business. The five invaders were about theirs.

As the paddles dipped, however, Knowlton held back.

"Say, Rod, we didn't tell these fellows about Schwandorf's Indian. Hold up a second, men."

While all rested on their paddles he spoke of the mysterious messenger dispatched from Nazareth. Pedro and Lourenço contemplated the river, then frowned.

"That may be of importance, *senhores*," said Lourenço. "It may change everything for us. We saw a lone Indian go past the *coronel's* place, traveling fast, three days before you came. I would give much to know where he is now and what word he carries. A short man with a bad left leg, you say. We shall keep watch for such a man. Perhaps we may meet him."

Wherein he predicted more accurately than he knew.

THE canoe swung out and the paddlers settled into the steady stroke to which they were growing accustomed. Hour after hour they forged on, the Brazilians adjusting their speed to that of the Americans, who had not yet attained the muscular ease of habitual canoe-men. The miles flowed slowly but surely behind them; the sun rolled higher and hotter; the silence of approaching noon crept over the jungle on either side. Then, as the time drew near when they would land for a more hearty meal than that of the morning, Pedro pointed ahead.

Up out of the bush on the Peruvian shore rose a vulture. It flapped sullenly away as if disappointed. The bushmen, quick to note anything that might be a sign, paid

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no attention to the bird's flight but marked with unerring eye the spot whence it had taken wing.

"Let us cross, comrades, and see what we may see," Pedro called. "If nothing is there, we can eat."

But something was there. All saw it before they landed—the stern of a small, speedy canoe almost concealed in a narrow rift at the bottom of the bank. In the soil of the rising slope were the prints of bare feet. And Pedro, scanning the tracks narrowly after he and the others reached shore, asserted—

"These were not made today."

Up the bank they climbed, silent and watchful. At the top Lourenço took the lead. In under big trees the five passed in file. A short distance from the edge Lourenço stopped, looking at the ground. The others spread out and stared at the thing he had found.

Between the buttress-roots of a tall tree was a crude shelter of palm-leaves. Before this lay the scattered bones of a man. The skull had been crushed by a mighty blow.

The bones were picked clean—had been stripped and torn asunder days before, and the vulture which had just left had gotten nothing for its belated visit. Among them were remnants of cloth, a belt and a machete, and strands of coarse black hair. A few feet away lay a cheap "trade" gun. Lourenço inspected the weapon and laid it back.

"Did he shoot before he was downed?" asked Knowlton.

"No. The gun is loaded. His death came from above." The bushman ran his eye up the towering tree, then pointed to a large dark object on the ground near by.

"*Castanha.* Brazil-nut tree," he explained. "That heavy nut fell and smashed the Indian's skull like an egg. Indian, yes. His gun, his shelter, and his hair show that. And—" stooping and pointing at one of the bones "—that bone shows who he was. See, *capitao.*"

McKay looked down on a leg-bone. At some time the leg had been broken and badly set, if set at all. The bone was crooked.

"A short Indian with a crooked leg. Schwandorf's messenger!"

"*Si.* No man will ever receive the message he bore. He camped here days ago. Now he camps here forever."

CHAPTER XII

THE ARROW

SLOWLY, silently, two canoes glided along the still, dark water of a gloomy creek overarched by the interlaced limbs of lofty trees.

The first, propelled by the slow-dipping blades of two Brazilian bushmen, seemed to be seeking something; for it nosed along with frequent pauses of the paddles, during which it drifted almost to a stop while its crew searched the solemn jungle-depths reaching away from the right-hand shore. The second, carrying three bronzed and bearded men of another continent, was only trailing the leader.

It moved and paused like the first, but the recurrent scrutiny of the farther gloom by its paddlers was that of men who saw only a meaningless, monotonous bulk of buttresses and trunks and tangle of looping lianas. In this dimness and bewildering chaos, the trio might as well have been blind. The eyes of the tiny fleet were in the first boat.

The progress of the dugouts was almost stealthy. Not a paddle thumped or splashed, not a voice spoke. They moved with the alert caution born not of fear but of wary readiness for any sudden event—like prowling jungle-creatures which, themselves seeking quarry, must be ever on guard lest they become the hunted instead of the hunters.

For the past two days they had moved thus. The last fresh meat had been shot miles down the river, where a well-placed bullet from the rifle of McKay had downed a fat swamp deer. Since that day not a gun had been fired. The rations now were tough jerked beef and monkey-meat, slabs of salt *pirarucu* fish, and farinha, varied by tinned delicacies from the stores of the Americans. Henceforth gunfire was tabu unless it should become necessary in self-defence.

At length the fore canoe halted with an abruptness that told of back-strokes of the blades hidden under water. McKay, bowman of the trailing craft, also backed water, while his mates held their paddles rigid. The two boats drifted together.

"This is the place," Lourenço said, speaking low.

The Americans, scanning the shore, saw nothing to differentiate the spot from the rest of the wilderness growth. Yet

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Lourenço's tone was sure. Pedro's face also showed recognition of his surroundings. With no apparent motion of the paddles—though the wrists of the paddlers moved almost imperceptibly—the canoe of the bushmen floated to the bank. They picked up their rifles, twitched their bow up on land, and turned their faces to the forest.

"Stay here," was Pedro's subdued command, "until you hear the bird-call which we taught you down the river."

He and Lourenço faded into dimness and were gone.

"Beats me how them guys find their way round," muttered Tim. "I could land here twenty times hand-runnin', but if I went away and then come back I'd never know the place."

"It's all in the feel of it," was McKay's low-toned explanation. "They find places and travel the bush as an Indian does—by a sixth sense. Take them to New York City, guide them around, then turn them loose—and they'd be hopelessly lost in ten minutes."

The others nodded agreement and sat watching. In the shadows no creature moved. Afar off some bird cried mournfully like a lost soul condemned to wander forever alone in the grim green solitudes. No other sound came to the listeners, save the ever-present hum of the big forest mosquitoes, to which they now had become indifferent. For all they could see or hear of their two guides, they might as well have been alone. Yet they knew the Brazilians were not far away, treading the maze with sure step and scouting hawk-eyed for any sign of danger.

At length a long soft whistle sounded in the bush ahead. Any Indian hunter hearing that sound would straightway have begun scanning the high branches, for the liquid call was that of the *mutum*, or curassow turkey. But the waiting trio knew it for Pedro's signal that all was clear. At once they slid their canoe to shore, lifted its bow to a firm grip on the clay and, after plumbing the shadows, quietly advanced in squad column.

A few steps and they halted suddenly and whirled. A voice had spoken just behind them. There, squatting leisurely between the root-buttresses of a huge tree, Lourenço looked up at them in amusement. They had passed within rifle-length of him without seeing him.

"Of what use are your eyes, comrades?" he chaffed. "In the bush one should see in all directions at once. You were looking at that patch of sunlight just ahead, yes? But danger lurks in the shadows, not in the glaring light."

Without awaiting an answer he arose and took the lead. At the edge of the small sun-lit space beyond he halted.

"You were heading for the right place," he added then. "Look around. Do you see anything?"

Swiftly they scrutinized the gap left by the fall of a great tree whose gigantic trunk had bludgeoned weaker trees away in its crushing descent. Seeing nothing unusual, they then peered around them. Tim suddenly snapped up his rifle.

"Holler tree there—and a man in it! Hey, come out o' that!"

"Your eyes improve," Lourenço complimented. "But the man is Pedro."

Tim lowered the gun as Pedro, grinning, came out of his concealment.

"That is the tree of the Raposa," Lourenço went on. "The lightning flashing in from above showed us the man. But now, *senhores*, I think we must tramp the bush for some time before we find that Raposa again. There is no trace of him here."

"Hm!" said Knowlton. Striding to the hollow tree, he peered about inside it. The cavity was almost big enough to sling a hammock in, but it was empty of any indication of habitation, human or otherwise. A temporary refuge—that was all.

"No sign anywhere around here, eh?" queried McKay.

"We have found none. We shall look farther, but I have small hope. If you *senhores* will make the camp this time we shall start at once and stay out until dark. Build no fire until we return. And if you hear the call of the *mutum* pay no attention to it; we may use it to locate each other if we separate, and also perhaps as a decoy. Any wild man, red or white, hearing that call would seek the bird making it, for a fine fat *mutum* is well worth killing. Keep quiet and be on guard."

"Right. Go ahead."

THE bushmen turned at once and stole away. The others returned to the canoes, transported the necessary duffel to the base of the hollow tree, made camp with a few poles, and

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squatted against the trunk to smoke, watch and wait. Several times they heard *mutum* calls receding in the distance. Then came silence.

The sun-thrown shadows in the gap crawled steadily eastward. Knowlton tested the feed of his automatic which, since its balkiness in the fight with the Peruvians, he had kept carefully oiled and free from the slightest speck of rust. Tim arose at intervals and paced up and down in sentry-go, eyes and ears alert—a useless activity, but one which provided an outlet for his restless energy. McKay let his gaze rove over the small area visible from their post, studying the contours of the towering trunks, the prone giant whose fall had opened the hole in the leafy roof, the parasitical vines twined about other trees, the thin outflung buttresses supporting the mighty columns—all familiar sights to him, but the only things to occupy his vision. So limned on his brain did the scene become that after a time he could close his eyes and see it in every important detail.

It might have been two hours after Pedro and Lourenço had departed—the shadows had grown much longer—when over McKay stole the feeling that he was being watched. He glanced at his companions and found that neither of them was looking at him. Knowlton, sitting with hands clasped around up-drawn knees, was dozing. Tim, though wide awake, was staring absently at a fungus. The captain's eyes searched the short vistas all about, spying nothing new. Still the feeling persisted. Then all at once his roaming gaze stopped, became fixed on a point some forty feet away.

There rose a rough-barked red-brown tree, and from it, near the ground, projected a blackish bole. McKay was very sure the protuberance had not been there before. He had stared steadily at that tree more than once and its shape was quite clear in his mind. Was that bump an insensate wood-growth now revealed for the first time by the changing sun-slant, or——

For minutes he watched it. It did not move. Then Tim, restless again, rose directly in McKay's line of sight, yawned silently, swung his gun to his shoulder and began another slow parade of his self-appointed post. When he had stepped aside McKay looked again for the puzzling bole.

It was gone.

With a bound the captain was up and dashing toward the tree, drawing his pistol as he ran. But within three strides he went down. A tough vine, unnoticed on the ground, looped snakily around one ankle and threw him hard. His gun flew from his hand. As he fell a tiny whispering sound flitted past, followed by a small blow somewhere behind him. Ensued a gruff grunt from Tim and the swift clatter of a breech-bolt.

Raging, McKay kicked his foot loose and heaved himself up. Empty-handed, he continued his rush for the tree. But when he reached it he found nothing behind it. If anything had been there it now was gone and the vacant shadows beyond were as inscrutable as ever.

Feet padded behind him and Tim and Knowlton halted on either side. A moment of silent searching and Tim broke into reproach.

"Cap, don't never do that again! If ye take a tumble in my line o' fire, for the love o' Mike stay down till I shoot! I come so near drillin' ye when ye hopped up that I'm sweatin' blood right now."

In truth, the veteran was pale around the mouth, and his broad face was beaded with cold drops.

"I seen more'n one time in France when I felt like shootin' my s'perior officer, but I never come so near doin' it as jest now. I had finger to trigger and had took up the slack, and a hair's weight more pull would have spattered yer head all around. And besides givin' me heart-failure ye let that guy git away. We'll never find him——"

"You saw him?" McKay cut in.

"I seen somethin' beyond ye—couldn't make out what 'twas, but from the way ye was goin' over the top I knowed it must be a man. And then when the arrer come——"

"Arrow?"

"Sure. Missed ye when ye took that flop and stuck in the tree over yonder. What'd ye rush the guy for, anyways? Whyn't ye drill him from where ye was?"

In the reaction from his sudden fright Tim was as wrathfully ready to "bawl out" his captain as if he were some raw rookie. McKay, with a cool smile, explained his abrupt action, meanwhile reconnoitering the dimness for any further sign of the vanished assailant. None showed.

While Tim stood vigilant guard the other two stooped and moved around the base of the tree, narrowly examining the ground.

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Beyond it they paused at one spot, fingered the soil lightly and lighted a match or two.

"No ghost," said Knowlton. "Barefoot man. Didn't leave much trace, but enough to show he was here. Let's look at that arrow."

Back to the hollow tree they went, retrieving McKay's pistol on the way. About a yard above the earth a long shaft projected from the bark. Knowlton reached for it, but McKay held him back and drew it out.

"M-hm. Thought so," he muttered. "Poisoned."

"Oof! Nice gentle sort of a cuss," rumbled Tim. "That smear on the point—is that poison?"

"Poison. Quickest and deadliest kind of poison. Mixes instantly with blood. Paralysis — convulsions — death. The least scratch and you're gone. Wicked head on this thing, too. Looks like a piece of serrated bone. See all those little barbs along the edges? War-arrow, all right."

"Meanin' that we'll be jumped pretty soon by more Injuns. If that guy's on the war-path he ain't alone."

"Wouldn't be a bad idea to take cover," nodded McKay. Turning the five-foot shaft downward, he plunged its head into the soft ground and left it sticking there, harmless.

"Tim, go down and guard the canoes. Merry, lie in between these roots and keep watch off that way. I'll go over to that tree where the spy hid."

For another hour the camp was silent. Each in his covert, finger on trigger, the trio watched with ceaseless vigilance, expecting each instant to detect dusky forms crawling up from tree to tree. Yet nothing of the sort came. Nor did any hostile sound reach them. Somewhere parrots squawked, somewhere else the puppy-like yapping of toucans disturbed the solitude; nothing else.

THE wan light faded. The sun crawled up the trees, leaving all the ground in shadow. Then, not far off, sounded the soft whistle of the *mutum*. Suspicious, the watchers held their places until, with another whistle, Pedro came into view, followed by Lourenço.

McKay arose, met them, and briefly explained the situation. They nodded, but seemed undisturbed.

"We can start a fire now, *capitao*," Lourenço said. "Night comes and we are hungry. There will be no danger before another dawn."

With which he leaned his rifle against a tree and started immediate preparations for a meal. Pedro continued on to the canoes, made sure they were drawn up high enough to remain in place in case of any sudden rain and returned with Tim. Around them now resounded the swiftly rising roar of the nightly outbreak of animal life. The sun vanished. At once blackness whelmed all except the little fire.

"See anything while you were out?" asked McKay.

"We found no trace of the Raposa," Lourenço evaded.

"What do you plan to do now?"

"Eat—smoke—talk—sleep."

McKay eyed the bushman keenly, feeling that he was holding something back. But, feeling also that this pair knew what they were about, he bided his time. When all had eaten and tobacco-smoke was blending with that of the burning wood Lourenço drew the arrow from the ground and studied it. Then he passed it to Pedro, who, after a critical examination, held it in the blaze until the deadly head was burned away.

"A big-game arrow of the cannibal Mayorunas," said Lourenço. "The point, with its saw-tooth barbs, is made from the tail-bone of the *araya*, the flat devil-fish of the swamp lakes. That fish, as you perhaps know, has a whip-like tail armed with that bone; and if he strikes the bone into your flesh it breaks off and stays in the wound, and you are likely to die."

"But in that case death comes from gangrene," McKay remarked. "This point had been dipped in *wourali* poison."

"You have seen such arrows before, *capitao?*"

"Seen the poison before, yes. Over in British Guiana. The Macusi Indians make it from the *wourali* vine, some bitter root or other, a couple of bulbous plants, two kinds of ants—one big and black with a venomous bite, the other small and red—a lot of pepper, and the pounded fangs of *labarri* and *couanacouchi* snakes. They boil all this stuff down to a thick syrup, and that's the poison. The man who makes it is sick for days afterwards."

"Our cannibals make that poison in much the same way. Yet Guiana is many hundreds of miles from here and our Indians know nothing of those Macusi people.

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Queer, is it not, that the same plan should be used by savages thousands of miles apart?"

"Rather odd. Must have started from some common source hundreds of years ago and spread around. Queerest thing is, though, that a poison so deadly doesn't spoil meat for eating."

"Huh?" exclaimed Tim. "Mean to say them cannibals can kill us by scratchin' us with a poison-arrer and then stummick us afterwards?"

"Exactly. You'd taste just as sweet as ever, Tim—maybe more so. Cheer up! They say it doesn't hurt much to die that way. You're paralyzed so quick you just sort of fade out."

Tim shook his head, his abhorrence of poison strong as ever. Knowlton spoke.

"I've heard that this *wourali* poison is much overrated—that it will kill only birds and monkeys, not men."

"*Por Deus!* Whoever said that was a fool trying to appear wise!" Pedro snorted. "We have seen the poison-death, and we know."

McKay also shook his head.

"Experiments have been made with the *wourali* of the Macusis," he stated. "It was tried on a hog, a sloth—and a sloth is mighty hard to kill—also on mules, and on a full-grown ox weighing almost half a ton. It killed every one of them."

A momentary silence followed. Tim gazed sourly at the arrow, now harmless but still sinister.

"Urrrgh!" he growled. "Cap, ye had a narrer squeak—come near gittin' it from in front and behind too. Wisht I could have drilled that guy."

The bushmen grinned. And Lourenço's next speech was amazing.

"Be thankful you did not. That bullet might have killed us all."

After enjoying their puzzled expressions a moment he continued.

"We are nearer to a Mayoruna *maloca* than I thought. Not the one I intended to seek, but a smaller one. It is about three days' journey from here, and to reach it we must go through the bush. The man who left this arrow here today is from that *maloca*.

"A week ago his brother went hunting, and he has not returned. So this young savage and three of his comrades now are searching the bush for some sign of him. Today they separated, each going in a different direction, agreeing to meet again tonight at a place less than half a day's journey from here. This man circled around and worked along this creek, knowing his brother would hardly go beyond the water. He spied our canoes, then sought the men who had come in them, and found you.

"He watched you for some time, and if you had not rushed at him he would have slipped away without attacking you, for he was alone and he saw your guns. But when you, *capitao*, suddenly leaped at him he darted away, then stopped long enough to send an arrow at you. After that he dodged out of sight and ran to the camp of his three friends. He is there now, telling about you."

"Great guns! You chaps are wizards!" cried Knowlton. "How do you know all this?"

"Because we met him while on our way back here. He was running hard and we heard him, so we blocked him. After we convinced him that we were friendly we talked for some time—I can speak their tongue—and he told us about you. He was sure you were enemies to him and his people and believed also you had killed his missing brother, and he was going first to rejoin his companions and then hasten to the *maloca* to bring all their fighters against you. It was well that we met him in time. It was well, too, that you did not shoot him—or even shoot at him. His companions would have learned of it and then—death for us all."

"And now what?"

"Now, comrades, we all go to the *maloca* of that man. We meet him and the other three tomorrow at the place where we talked to him today. I told him we were going to visit that other chief whom I know, and though he was at first suspicious of a trap he finally agreed to lead us to his own chief. So in the morning we march. Now let us sleep."

Knowlton and McKay glanced at each other and nodded.

"Luck's with us so far," said the captain.

"Right. We just march right into Jungle Town with body-guard and everything. Pretty soft! Wonder if they'll turn out the tomtom band to drum us in."

Tim said nothing. He squinted again at the headless arrow, then inspected the breech-bolt of his rifle.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY OF THE JUNGLE

DAWN came, dismal, damp and chill. Moisture dripped drearily from the upper reaches, and under the dense canopy of leaves and limbs the gloom and the fog together made a murk wherein the early-rising bushmen were scarcely visible to the North Americans ten feet away. Yet day had come, or was coming; the noise of the animal world left little doubt of that.

By the light of a sullen smoky fire and oil-smeared torches Pedro and Lourenço made up their packs, cording them roughly with bark-cloth strips brought from headquarters. The Americans, after eating a more solid meal than the Brazilians seemed to require, also rolled their blankets, hammocks, nets and other paraphernalia; strapped the outfits into the army pack-harnesses which they had transported for thousands of miles and never yet used; crammed their web belts with cartridges, slung their sheathed machetes down their left thighs, looked to their guns and announced themselves ready to go.

While the Northerners made these final preparations their guides slipped away for a time. Pedro, on his return, announced that the canoes had been concealed. Lourenço, bringing back the freshly filled canteens of the ex-army men, delivered with them the marching orders of the day.

"If you thirst, comrades, drink only from your canteens. If the canteens fail, never fill them from flowing water unless the Indians also drink from the stream. There are always small pools to be found, and though their water may be warm and stale it is not likely to be poisoned, as the streams may be.

"Today, and every day after we meet the cannibals, make no suspicious moves. Do not speak harshly. Do not laugh or sneer at them. They are unreasoning and easily insulted and lifelong foes when angered. Let me do the talking.

"Do not hold a gun in a threatening manner or draw pistols unless you must fight.' Then kill.

"Above all, pay no attention to their women.

"Now we go. I lead."

He turned and strode away into the fog as easily and surely as if cat-eyed and cat-footed. Pedro swung nonchalantly after him. The others followed in order, hitching at their pack-straps.

The ghostly haze about them now was paler, but through the interstices overhead came no glint of sunshine, nor even the glow of a clear dawn. The whole sky evidently was overcast and around the marching men the gloom still lay thick. Yet Lourenço's eyes seemed to bore through the shades and the dank shroud blurring the trunks, for his steady gait did not falter. The little file hung close together, for all knew that any man straggling would be instantly lost.

Worming around gigantic columns, crawling over rotting trunks long laid low, changing direction abruptly when blocked by some great butt too high to be scaled, sinking ankle-deep in clinging mud, the venturesome band wound along through the wilderness. Repeated glances at his compass showed McKay that the general trend of the march was southeast; but the impassable obstacles encountered at frequent intervals necessitated not only detours, but sometimes actual back-tracking.

"Walk four miles to advance one," was his thought. And for some time it seemed that such was the case. But then the ground changed, the light improved, the trees thinned and the undergrowth became more dense—and, paradoxically, the rate of progress improved.

This was because the smaller growth gave the two leaders a chance to cut their way straight onward instead of dodging about; and cut they did. Their machetes swung with untiring energy, opening a path through what seemed an impenetrable tangle. Now every yard of movement was a yard gained. But the ground was rising, and the struggle up some of the sharp slopes winded more than one man.

Then the slope dipped the other way and they slipped down into a ravine where water gleamed darkly. Here a halt was called while the leaders sought for a fallen tree. Tim squatted and mopped his face for the hundredth time.

"Gosh, this is what I call travelin'!" he panted. "Flounderin' round in mud-soup, bit to death by skeeters and them what-ye-call-'em flies—*piums*—sweatin' yerself bone dry and totin' forty thousand pounds on yer back, not to mention hardware slung all over ye. This ain't no place for a minister's

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son or a fat guy, I'll tell the world. And this is only the start!"

A call from Pedro forestalled any answer. The trio struggled along to the spot where the guides waited at the butt of a slanting tree-trunk spanning the gulf. As they reached it Pedro walked carefully up the trunk, carrying a long slender sapling, which he lowered and fixed in the bottom of the stream. Then, steadying himself with the upper end of this pole, he continued his journey to the other side, where he flipped the sapling back to Lourenço. One by one the others crossed, slipping, almost losing balance, but managing to evade a fall. Tim, walking the precarious bridge and looking down, saw that the surface of the water was dotted with the heads of venomous snakes.

"Are you following your trail of yesterday?" demanded McKay.

"No, *capitao*. Yesterday we circled. Today we go as nearly straight as possible."

"And you can find the appointed place by this new route?" The captain's tone was dubious.

"Certainly. Else I should go the other way. Come."

Up another bank they toiled and on through rugged country which seemed momentarily to become higher and harder to traverse. In the minds of the Americans grew suspicion that, for the first time, the Brazilians were bluffing; it seemed impossible for any man to keep his sense of direction in such a maze. But they said no word and followed on.

AT LENGTH the leader paused and sent the long call of the *mutum* floating through the trees. No answer came. After a moment the line moved on, each man peering ahead with sharper gaze, each holding his rifle a little tighter. To the Americans, at least, the thought of possible ambush loomed large.

Four man-eating savages, hidden in this labyrinthine tangle and armed with arrows whose slightest scratch meant death, could strike down every man of this expedition without even a wound in return; for of what avail were high-power guns, automatic pistols and machetes against invisible enemies? Yet there was assurance in Lourenço's confident air, and reassurance in the thought that these tribesmen would be unlikely to assail a band avowedly on its way to visit their chief. Besides—Knowlton smiled grimly—even if the Mayorunas hungered for human flesh it would be more economical of labor to let the meat travel to the slaughter-house on its own legs than to kill it here and carry it home.

Again the *mutum* whistle drifted away. Again no answer came. For a short distance farther the file continued its march. Then, in a small opening where the uptorn roots of a tree rose like a wall at one side, it halted.

"The place of meeting," Pedro said.

All peered around. None saw anything but the upstanding roots, the forest jumble, the misty serpentine lianas. None heard any sound but their own hoarse breathing, the solemn drip of water, the insect hum and the occasional melancholy notes of birds. The place seemed bare of life. Yet upon McKay came again that feeling of being watched.

Slowly, deeply, Lourenço spoke. The words meant nothing to his mates. They were like no words they knew. His eyes roved about as he talked and it was evident that he saw no more than did the silent men behind him. But they guessed that he said he and they were there as agreed, with peace in their hearts, and that he was telling the men of the wilderness to come forward without fear. And they guessed rightly.

As quietly as a fantom of the mist, a man took shape at the edge of the tree-roots. Tall, straight, slender, symmetrically proportioned, with unblemished skin of light bronze hue, straight black hair and deep dark eyes, he was a splendid type of savage. Face and body were adorned with glossy paint—scarlet and black rings around the eyes, two red stripes from temples to chin, wavy lines on arms and chest.

He held a bow longer than himself, with a five-foot arrow fitted loosely to the string and pointed downward, but ready for instant use. Diagonally across his body ran a cord supporting a quiver, from which the feathered shafts of several other arrows projected above his left shoulder. Around his waist looped another cord from which dangled a small loin-mat. Otherwise he was totally nude—a bronze statue of freedom.

Lourenço spoke again in the same quiet tone. The savage stepped warily forward. At the same moment three other naked men

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appeared with equal stealth from tree-trunks which had seemed barren of all life. Like the first, each of these held an arrow ready but pointing downward; and each moved with the slow, velvety step of a hunting jaguar.

Their eyes searched those of these strange men of another world who, wearing useless clothing, carrying heavy weapons of steel, burdening themselves with queer weights on their backs, now invaded the wilderness which they and their fathers had roamed untrammeled for centuries.

The invaders in turn studied the faces of the Mayorunas, of whom so many gruesome tales were told. For long silent minutes primitive man and civilized probed each other for signs of treachery—and found none.

Tim, forgetting the orders of the day, spoke out abruptly. At the gruff jar of his voice the wild men started and raised their weapons.

"Say, are these guys cannibals? I was lookin' to see some ugly mutts with underslung jaws and mops o' frizzy hair, like them Fiji Islanders ye see pitchers of. Barrin' the paint, I've seen worse lookin' fellers than these back home."

With which he gave the savages a wide, unmistakably approving grin.

"Shut up!" muttered McKay.

Lourenço, unruffled, made instant capital of Tim's remarks.

"My comrade of the red hair," he said in the Indian tongue, "has never before seen the mighty warriors of the Mayorunas, and is astonished to find them such handsome men. He says his own countrymen are not so good to look upon."

Slowly the menacing arrows sank. As the savages studied Tim's wholesome grin and absorbed the broad flattery of Lourenço a slight smile passed over their faces. They stood more at ease. The whites sensed at once that, for a moment at least, a friendly footing had been established, and relaxed from their own tension.

Once more Lourenco spoke, motioning toward the farther distances. The Indian who had first appeared now replied briefly. Two of the others stepped back to their trees and lifted long hollow tubes.

"What's them?" demanded Tim.

"Blow-guns," Pedro answered. "They use them for small or thin-skinned game. See, the two blow-gun men carry also short darts in their quivers, and small pouches of poison."

"Uh-huh. They like their poison a dang sight better'n I do. Say, are them guys goin' to march behind us? I don't want no poison needles slipped into my back, accidental or otherways."

Two of the savages were walking toward the rear of the line. Knowlton, exasperated, snapped out:

"They'll walk where they like, and you'll do well to give us more marching and less mouth. You nearly spilled the beans just now, and if Lourenço hadn't said something that pleased these fellows we all might be in the soup this minute. Pipe down!"

"Aw, looey, I only said these guys was good-lookin'. Ain't no fight in words like that."

"You heard the orders this morning—let Lourenço do the talking. That goes! We're skating on thin ice—so thin that if it breaks we drop plump into ——. Less noise!"

"That goes, Tim," McKay echoed.

"Right, sir," was the sulky answer. "I'm deef and dumb."

"March," added McKay.

The head of the column already was on the move, led by the tallest Indian and a blow-gun man, behind whom walked the two Brazilians. The whole line took up the step in turn and passed on into the unknown.

AGAIN McKay consulted his compass at intervals, finding that now the route led more to the south, though there still was an easterly trend. After a time, however, the telltale needle informed him that they were proceeding almost due east, and glances at the surroundings showed that on their right was a densely matted mass of undergrowth.

Presently this thinned, and the tall Indian up ahead swerved to his right. Not long afterward another interwoven brush wall blocked the way, and this time the leader veered to the west. Not until an opening appeared did he resume his southward course. It dawned on McKay that the savages, having no bush-knives, were accustomed to follow the line of least resistance. This obviously increased the distance traveled.

The men of Coronel Nunes too perceived this. A halt was called, during which Lourenço talked with the guide, tapped his machete, and evidently protested against

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needless detours. The leader, with a few words, pointed south. Lourenço nodded and replied. The march was resumed, and when the next impenetrable tangle was encountered the Indians in the van stepped aside, the machetes of the Brazilians flashed out, and a way was cut straight through. From that time on the long knives came into frequent play and a direct course was maintained.

Suddenly, with a grunt of warning, the tall tribesman stopped. The plan of chopping through instead of going around had brought the Indians into a part of the forest which they had not heretofore traversed in their search for the missing hunter. Now they stood in a small trough between knolls, under good-sized trees around which grew little brush. The ground was soft, almost watery. In the damp air, faint but unmistakable, hung the odor of death.

The savages at the rear came forward at once. All four of them spread out and, sniffing the air, advanced up the trough. A cry broke from one of them. The others, and the white men too, hastened to the spot whence the call had come.

Scattered about in the soft muck were bones, two skulls, bits of tawny fur, a long bow, several big-game arrows. Around them the ground was marked with many tracks. Most of the imprints were those of the vultures which had stripped the bones, but there were others—those of a barefoot man, of a great cat, and of a couple of wild hogs. The peccary-tracks went straight on, but those of the man and the cat showed that a fierce struggle had occurred. And one of the two grinning skulls was that of a jaguar.

The story was plain. The hunter, following fast on the trail of the hogs, had suddenly met the jaguar. He had shot it. One arrow, bloodstained for more than a foot above the barb, proved that. But in the few seconds of life left to it the animal had sprung and fatally torn the man. Then, as usual, had dropped the black scavengers of the sky to rend them both.

Silently the men of the bush and the men of the north looked down at the brief history written in the mud—a story only a week old, yet ancient as human life itself—primitive man and ferocious brute destroying each other as in the prehistoric days when saber-toothed tiger and troglodyte hunted and slew for the right to live.

And as it had been then, so it was now—the living read the tale of tragedy and passed on, leaving the bones behind them. Only before they went the Mayorunas threw the remnants of the jaguar aside and piled the bones of their dead comrade together in one place. Then, bearing with them his bow and arrows, they resumed their way without a word.

CHAPTER XIV

A DUEL WITH DEATH

RAIN came and went.

The first night's camp of the strangely assorted company was a wet one, for well on in the day the skies poured down the watery weight which had been troubling them since morning. Yet even in such miserable weather the four tribesmen of the Mayorunas declined to sleep in the same camp with the whites. They accepted the food tendered them, but when it was eaten they withdrew to some covert of their own to spend the night. Whereby the whites knew that, though their guides now could no longer suspect them of killing the lone hunter, they still were not accepted as friends.

"Did ye say them guys had a trick o' jabbin' men in their hammicks at night, Renzo?" was Tim's significant question after the Indians had departed.

"Have no fear," Lourenço assured him. "They have promised to take us safely to their chief."

"How much is the word of a cannibal worth?" asked Knowlton.

"Worth everything, so long as you do nothing to make them forget it, *senhor*. Being uncivilized, they are not liars."

The lieutenant eyed him sharply, half-minded to regard the answer as insolent. But there was no insolence in the Brazilian's straightforward gaze and McKay laughed approvingly.

"Well spoken!" was the captain's comment.

"Among those people there are but two great crimes," Lourenço added. "They are—to speak falsely or to be a coward."

"Wherein a goodly portion of the so-called civilized world would fail to measure up to the standards of these cannibals," McKay said. "By the way, have you asked them about the Raposa?"

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"No, *capitao*." It is as well not to put into their heads the idea that we are hunting any one here. I shall say nothing of that matter until we reach the chief who knows me."

"Good idea."

With that the talk ended and all sought their hammocks, dog-tired from the day's travel. No watch was kept, for, as Pedro quaintly phrased it— "We now are in the hands of God and the cannibals." Nor was any watch needed.

Daybreak brought sunlight. While the breakfast coffee was being boiled the four wild men appeared silently and simultaneously, one bringing a red howling monkey and another a large green parrot as their contributions to the morning meal. Neither bird nor animal showed any wound except a slightly discolored spot surrounding a skin-puncture no larger than if made by a woman's hatpin—the marks left by poisoned darts from the ten-foot blow-guns. When the meat was cooked they offered some of it to the whites, of whom Tim alone refused.

"I'd as quick eat a rat killed with Paris green," he growled. "No poisoned meat gits into my stummick if I know it."

"Bosh!" scoffed McKay. "It's perfectly wholesome—though it's tough as a rubber boot."

"And I might tell you, *senhores*, that among these people it is an insult to refuse any food offered you," added Lourenço. "I advise you to forget about the poison hereafter and eat what is put before you, even if it stinks."

His advice was emphasized by the evident displeasure of the tribesmen, who, though saying nothing, looked rather grimly at the man who had despised their provisions. But Lourenço then smoothed over the matter by telling them that the red-haired man was sick at the stomach that morning—which, at that particular moment, was not far from the truth.

Soon the column was once more on its way across the hill country which hourly grew higher and rougher—a constant succession of ridges and ravines. Lourenço, pointing out the absence of water-marks on the trees of the uplands, said that now the land of the great annual floods had been left behind; for even the sixty-foot rise of waters in the rainy season could not reach to these hill-tops. With the entry into this *terra firma* the travelers had also found the sun again, the dank mist of yesterday having vanished. Nevertheless the going was fully as hard as on the previous day, both because of the density of the bush and the labor of crossing the narrow but deep streams flowing at the bottom of nearly every clove. Few words were exchanged, every man needing all his breath for the work of walking.

As before, the keen machetes of the Brazilians opened a direct route through all opposing undergrowth. When a brief halt was called at noon the Mayorunas, who seemed to know exactly where they were despite the fact that they had never before followed this straight course, informed Lourenço that much circuitous traveling had already been saved, and that by tramping hard until sundown they might succeed in reaching the tribal *maloca* that night. But McKay vetoed the idea of a forced march.

"This gait is fast enough and hard enough," he declared. "No sense in exhausting ourselves to save a few hours time. Also we don't want to go staggering into the Mayoruna village with our tongues hanging out and our knees wabbling. First impressions are lasting with such people and they might get an idea we were weaklings."

To which all except the savages, who did not understand the language of the white man, assented approvingly.

Yet it was the Mayorunas themselves who delayed arrival at their *maloca*—the Mayorunas and a monkey. When the sinking sun was still two hours high, and while the leader was forcing the pace as if determined to reach home that night whether the rest liked it or not, the monkey upset any such plan.

He was a big gray monkey and he was high up in the branches of a tall *matamata* tree where he deemed himself safe from the man-creatures laboring along the ground below. Wherefore he chattered impudently down at them and, as the tall Indian guide halted, showed his teeth derisively. The savage grunted. The man behind him also grunted and lifted his blow-gun. But the leader growled at him and the blow-gun sank.

With a swift sweep of the hand the guide drew from his quiver one of those long poisoned arrows and fitted it to the bow-cord, which he had laid on the ground.

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With two toes of each foot he held the cord firmly on the soil. His right hand lightly grasped the arrow and aimed it up at the insolent primate. His left drew the bow up, up, into an arc.

Twang! The cord thrummed as his lifted toes released it. The arrow whirred aloft. Then a snarl of chagrin from the marksman blended with the grunts of his mates. The arrow had failed to reach the quarry.

It had missed, however, by a mere hand's breadth—missed only because it struck the limb directly under the monkey, where it hung by the tip from the bark. Muttering something which may have been a Mayoruna malediction, the savage moved aside a step or two, drew another arrow, and set it to the cord with more care than before. But while he did this the monkey was not idle.

Chattering in rage, the animal leaned down, worked the arrow loose from the bark, and threw it aside. The deadly shaft turned in air, then plunged aimlessly down. At that instant all below were watching the guide, who in turn was looking at his toes and placing the new arrow in position. Unseen, the other missile hurtled down and ripped across the back of the marksman's left hand.

For an instant the tall cannibal stood as if petrified, staring at his cut hand and the shaft now sticking upright in the ground beside him. Then, in simple symbolism, he reversed the new arrow and stabbed it also into the dirt. Dropping his bow, he lay down on his back.

"Yuara will draw bow no more. Yuara goes to join the spirits of the dead," he said calmly.

Mechanically Lourenço translated the words. McKay sprang forward.

"No!" he disputed. "Not without a try for life, anyhow! Merry, sling a tourniquet! Quick!"

Knowlton jumped to the side of Yuara, tied a handkerchief above the elbow, twisted it tight. McKay whipped from a pocket a keen-bladed knife. In one swift ruthless slash he laid open the arm from elbow to knuckles.

"Keep that tourniquet tight!" he snapped. "Once let the blood get past it and he's gone. Tim, get out the salt-bag! Lourenço, tell this fellow to breathe deep and to keep it up!"

While Tim burrowed into his pack for the salt Lourenço spoke, as much for the benefit of the other tribesmen as for that of Yuara; for the three Mayorunas stood in ominous silence, watching the outrush of blood caused by the knife of the white man.

"The white man of the black beard, who is very wise, will save Yuara to draw many a good bow if Yuara will do as he says. Let Yuara breathe deeply, that the spirit of life remain in him to fight against the death-demon. Even now the poison rushes out of the arm of Yuara."

"Yuara cannot live," was Yuara's cool reply. "Where once the poison has entered, there follows death."

Lourenço's answer came like a blow in the face.

"Is Yuara then a coward, that he will die without a fight? Then he is no Mayoruna, for no Mayoruna is a coward. Let Yuara die if he will. His comrades shall carry to their *maloca* the tale that although the white man would have saved him he died like an old woman, because he had not the will to live!"

Fire shot into the eyes of the prostrate man. He ground his teeth and struggled to rise and throttle the insulting Brazilian.

"No, not that way," Lourenço went on at once. "Yuara can fight the death-demon only by drawing into himself the air in which is the spirit of life. The wise white man has stopped the poison at the place where the cloth is tied, and he knows the air-spirits will help Yuara if Yuara will breathe deep and long. If he will not, then the white man's medicine cannot save him. Yuara's life or death is in his own hands."

In his heart Lourenço had faint hope that the injured man would live. But he knew the rest of the cannibal tribe must soon hear the tale of this incident from the three now present, and he was preparing an excellent excuse for the failure of McKay to save him. Whether Yuara lived or not, the Mayorunas now would know that the whites had done their utmost for him, and that very fact might make a vast difference.

Yuara, though his eyes still flamed, sank back under McKay's restraining weight and obeyed orders. After the first couple of breaths he settled into his task, and his chest rose and fell rhythmically.

"Here's yer salt, cap. What'll I do with it?"

"You come here and hold this tourniquet

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—don't let it slip! Merry, fill this chap's mouth with salt. Lourenço, tell him to hold it as long as possible, then swallow it. Now, Merry, fix up a good strong salt poultice. The rest of you make camp. We've got a stiff fight on our hands and we can't go farther until we've either won or lost."

The Brazilians glanced at the sun-shadows and remained where they were. According to their experience, Yuara should be dead within ten minutes. Time enough to make camp when they knew how this venture would result. The Mayorunas also stood fast and watched for the shadow of death to blanch the face of their stricken mate.

But the minutes dragged past and Yuara's eyes did not grow dim. His first resignation over and his fighting blood aroused, he was battling grimly against fate. At times his deep respirations were broken by sudden gasps and spasmodic quivers shook his whole body. But he breathed on, paying no heed to the burning pain of his ripped and salted arm.

"By cripes, he's puttin' up a man's scrap!" blurted Tim. "Stay with it, old feller—ye'll win out yet!"

And as more minutes passed and the wounded man still breathed, a murmur of wonderment passed among the cannibals and the men of Nunes. Yuara should be dead, yet he was not even paralyzed. Such a thing had never before been known in this bush.

Lourenço touched Pedro's arm.

"Find a spot where we can make camp," he said. "I must stay here to speak to the wild men if words are needed."

RELUCTANTLY Pedro went away. Soon he was back with news of a suitable place. He found all bending closer over Yuara, whose breathing had become stertorous and whose eyes seemed fixed.

"Going!" was the bushman's thought. But the others would not have it so.

"How 'bout a shot o' booze to jolt his heart, cap?" suggested Tim, whose whole soul was in the fight.

McKay nodded. Knowlton quickly produced brandy and poured a stiff dose down Yuara's throat. It took hold at once and light came back into the Indian's eyes.

"Got a good chance yet," McKay asserted. "Don't loosen that tourniquet. Let the arm mortify if necessary, but hold that blood away from the heart at all costs. I'll chop his arm off at the shoulder before I'll give in."

His hard-set face showed he meant it.

Lourenço spoke to the Mayorunas, urging that camp be made at once. He and Pedro strode away and all three of the Indians followed.

"Really think he'll pull through, Rod?" Knowlton asked then. "If he does you're a miracle-worker."

"It's an experiment," McKay confessed, watching Yuara with unswerving intentness. "Never saw this done, but it's worth a try—and I honestly believe it will work. I saved an Indian over in Guiana once by cutting off his arm as soon as he was hit, but I want to keep this fellow's arm for him if possible. Feed him some more salt."

Time passed unheeded. Sounds of labor not far off told that camp was being built. Presently the absent five returned, two of the Mayorunas carrying a crude but strong litter constructed from saplings and giant fern-leaves. McKay rose stiffly on cramped legs.

"All right. You can move him," he consented.

Carefully Yuara was lifted to the litter and transported to the new camp. There the Americans found not only the open shed or *tambo* usually constructed by the Brazilians but also a somewhat similar shelter erected by the Indians. In the latter stood two stout crotched stakes, firmly braced—the handiwork of Pedro and Lourenço. And to these, with tough bush-rope, the Indians fastened the litter of Yuara, thus forming a rude but effective hammock.

While McKay and Knowlton continued their ministrations to the stricken man the rest of the camp work was completed, the Mayorunas making hanging beds for themselves from withes, leaves, and bush-cord, and the Brazilians slinging the hammocks of their own party and opening packs.

Night fell and the wounded man lived on. Supper was eaten, pipes smoked, the regular activities of the early hours of darkness gone through—and Yuara lived on. His deep breathing had become automatic, and his eyes stared straight up in concentration on his battle with the death-demon.

At length he was seized with violent nausea which convulsed him for a time. But when the spasms passed he lay back

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more easily, and a faint smile flitted over his face as he looked up at the white men.

"Been expecting that," said McKay. "Might loosen that ligature now—just a few seconds—tighten it! All right."

After watching the sick man a little longer he added:

"Now I'm going to eat and smoke. Feel like taking a drink too, but guess I won't. The Indian will pull through now, I think."

When he had returned to the Indian hut with pipe aglow Knowlton asked him—

"Now tell us how you doped out this cure."

"Combination of various things. Salt is a partial antidote to venom in the blood, and I got it into him in three ways—by mouth-absorption, by the stomach, and by the salt poultice, which drew out some of the poison from the forearm and helped neutralize what remained. Ripping his arm of course let out a lot of bad blood. Ligature above the elbow stopped most of the rest—though some sneaked past that point, I'm pretty sure.

"Big thing, though, was the deep breathing. Remember I told you about the experiments that killed mules and an ox? Another experiment was this—opening the windpipe of a poisoned mule after the heart stopped, inserting a pair of bellows, and starting artificial respiration. After four hours of this the mule came to life and stayed alive—though he was a wreck for a year afterward.

"I just put all these together, made the Indian do his own breathing—and here he is. I'm going to sit up a while longer and watch him, but the critical period is over. You chaps can turn in."

But none turned in until midnight, when no doubt remained that Lourenço's prophecy would come true—that Yuara would live to draw bow again. Then, when the slashed arm had been thoroughly cleansed and bound, Lourenço spoke once more to the savages.

"The medicine of the wise white man and the air-spirits have saved Yuara from the death-demon. Yuara has fought as a man of his tribe should fight and so has lived when he would have died. Tomorrow Yuara shall once more see his people, the first man of the Mayorunas to come back from the death of poison. And he and his comrades shall tell of the white man's wisdom, without which he now would lie cold on the ground."

"So shall it be," Yuara himself faintly answered. "Yuara, son of Rana, second chief of the men of Suba, will not forget."

"*Por Deus!*" exclaimed Lourenço. "Comrades, this man is no common hunter, but son of a sub-chief. *Capitao*, you have done good work today."

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The LIFE of RILEY

by Max Bonter

Author of "The Bullet and the Blast," "Everybody Likes a Gunman," etc.

JOE BUDGE, the boss fireman of the *North King*, was short a coal passer. He knew that the logical place to get one was——

Well, in those days the Buffalo waterfront was a wicked and interesting place. The entire region contiguous to the docks was alive. It fairly thrummed with the business of travel and thirst-quenching. It was not then held to be unconstitutional for a thirsty fireman off watch to walk openly up to a bar and proceed to wash some of the gas and coal dirt out of his insides.

Even the white-collared excursionists who billowed up and down lower Main Street like a windy sea supplied recruits to the ranks of the thirst-quenchers; although there were always some who, when encountering a group of firemen wabbling mellow with beer along the thoroughfare, were wont to draw their somber garments fastidiously about them and pass indignantly by.

Later, sitting on a sheltered after deck and inhaling the sweet breeze, they would discourse unctuously among themselves upon the beautiful solemnity of life and the straight channel through which the busy world should run. But down below, in the gas-charged inferno where the ship's hot furnaces lay, grimy, half-naked forms were sweating out the last drops of their cup of fleeting pleasure in the fierce heat and striving like fiends to *make* the world run.

Joe Budge, blissfully ignorant of the arid future, was non-speculative upon these things. He was short a coal-passer and he was likewise thirsty. Beer saloons were as plentiful thereabouts as crows in a cornfield and Budge ambled comfortably into the nearest and called for beer. He cast his eyes appraisingly over the dozen picturesque, overalled forms lounging in front of the bar.

Some were spending—others enjoying the hospitality of the spenders. They seemed too much occupied with their beverage to talk business, thought Budge; all except one who, evidently a stranger to the establishment, was sitting at a table and wearing that unmistakable expression that augurs an impecunious state. Budge accordingly motioned to him.

"Have a beer?" he asked sociably.

Alacrity would fall short of describing the degree of nimbleness with which the addressee accepted the boss fireman's invitation.

"You're a life-safer," said the lonesome one, burying his nose gratefully in the refreshing effervescence.

"Not a sailor, are you?" commented Budge, noting the man's ruddy features and the imprint of the Summer sun upon his face and neck.

"No—I'm a gandy dancer."

"You'll have to come again, partner. That's a new one on me."

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"Never hear of a 'gandy?'—railroad trackman."

"Oh! Well, you can handle the shovel, I s'pose?"

"Me? I can sure play that old banjo, partner."

"Have another beer. Want a job passin' coal?"

"What's that?"

"You're as green as I am, ain't you?" asked Budge humorously. "Well, passin' coal is a job aboard ship. We run between here and Chicago."

The railroad trackman reflected while the boss fireman's eyes roved approvingly over his firmly-knit frame and remarked especially his short, powerful neck set well between his shoulders.

"I'll make a water gandy out of you," he grinned temptingly.

"I'll go you, partner; it'll be a change from railroadin', anyway."

"Well, we sail at nine tonight. You'd better come aboard with me now. I'll show you your bunk and you can have your supper. You'll go on watch at eight o'clock and come off at midnight. What's your name?"

"Riley—Tom Riley."

"All right, Tom. I think you'll make a good coal passer."

The boss fireman took his recruit aboard the *North King*.

II

AT EIGHT o'clock Tom Riley saw the fire-hold of a ship for the first time. It impressed him as being an infernal place. The *North King* was a big twin-screw steamer of the salt-water coastwise type. She carried two batteries of boilers—four in the forward battery and two in the after. The boilers were set port and starboard, with the long fire-deck running like a gangway between.

Whew! Wasn't it hot? Riley stripped to the waist and put himself at the disposal of the fireman in the after battery, where he had been stationed by Joe Budge. The fireman was a big, savage-looking man who scowled fiercely at Riley by way of greeting.

"So you're the new coal-passer, hey? Well, git me out some coal!"

The recruit thought that he had never before seen quite so unattractive a physiognomy as this big coal heaver possessed and it was with much reluctance that he picked up a shovel and went to work.

"Greenhorn, hey? How d'ya think I'm goin' to git at them fires if ya pile coal up that way?"

The big bully seized the shovel and rudely yanked it from Riley's hand. His manner of instructing his pupil in the simple duties of coal passing was such as to make the recruit's blood boil. However, the latter bent again silently to the task, seemingly unmindful of the other's sneering attitude.

At nine o'clock a bell rang in the engine-room and the ship's big siren pealed its parting note. The firemen raked the banks back from their fires and turned on the air dampers. The *North King* swung slowly into Buffalo Creek and pointed her stem toward the outer harbor. The fire hold resounded with the harsh scraping of shovels and the loud clanging of fire-doors.

Tom Riley passed coal and raked ashes under the direction of his surly instructor. The latter seemed to be a good fireman, but he was unquestionably a heartless bully. His big frame apparently harbored no human quality except concentrated meanness. Stripped to the waist, while the bright glare revealed the knots of muscle that bulged from his arms and torso like ropes, he pitched coal into the fire-boxes and swore and sweated and bullied his coal-passer.

At midnight, when Riley went off watch, if the *North King* had not been in the middle of Lake Erie he would have jumped off and swum ashore. That course being out of the question, like a sensible man, but with his heart filled with resentment, he took a shower bath and went miserably to his bunk.

Six hours' deep sleep soothed the coal-passer somewhat; and at six in the morning, as he went to the mess room for breakfast, the *North King* pulled into the harbor of Cleveland. Riley relished his ham and eggs and coffee.

"If it wasn't for that blasted fireman," he confided to himself, "this would be the life of Riley."

The *North King* was a tourist boat. She was the speediest craft on the Lakes, making better than twenty knots. She carried only passengers and their baggage and her time in a port of call was limited to that required for discharging and receiving passengers. In Cleveland she was scheduled to remain only an hour.

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Tom Riley, standing at the forward gangway watching the baggagemen hustle about, was strongly tempted to jump ship. He had no money, but the bare thought of his approaching watch under the bull-dozing fireman was enough to drive him to any course that promised escape. While he stood nursing his impulse into action, the boss fireman came smilingly up and stood beside him.

"Come and have a beer, Riley. I know how it feels to be broke."

He led the willing coal-passer to a suitable place of refreshment.

"How do you like your job?" he enquired amiably.

"Lyin' ain't one of my accomplishments," grinned Riley. "That job and me don't fit."

"Stick with us a while. You'll like it better. None of 'em likes it at the start. The first six months is the worst," said Joe Budge gravely.

"Six *what?*" demanded Riley. "Six months heavin' coal for that—that——"

Budge laughed.

"You're workin' for a hard fireman, I'll admit."

"Wasn't he ever green himself?" exploded Riley. "How did he happen to get so wise all at once?"

"They say he's an ex-pug," went on the boss fireman. "Chicago man. Nobody likes him."

"An ex-pug, eh?" mused the coal-passer. "And he's degen'rated into coal-heavin'? Couldn't have been much in the ring."

"He looks like a bruiser, though. Name's Jim Beagle. You look as if you could go some yourself, Riley. Ever do any scrappin'?"

"Me? No—I'm only a shovel stiff, I guess."

"If some of you guys would talk back to that big Beagle a little it might do some good. He thinks he's got everybody bluffed. That's what's the matter with him."

The two men finished drinking their beer and went back aboard ship.

III

AT EIGHT o'clock Riley went again on watch in the fire-hold, but the ensuing four hours proved to be even worse torture than the first watch had been. He sweated and shoveled and held his peace; but Beagle the fireman was not satisfied. He seemed bent upon provoking an argument. Cleaning fires does not improve firemen's tempers, either. The bully rammed the slice bar viciously into the clinkers and then raked them out profanely. He swore roundly at Riley when the latter doused too much water upon the glowing refuse from the fires.

Then the coal-passer began shoveling the ashes and clinker into the ash gun. Once a large piece of clinker jammed the mouth of the gun and deflected the powerful stream of water upward, so that a miniature geyser hissed into the air and then sloshed back upon the deck of the fire-hold. Beagle jumped to the speaking tube, whistled to the engineer on watch to shut off the water and then turned savagely upon his helper.

"By ——! Y'u break up that clinker!" he roared.

Riley climbed the ladder at noon and made his way to the wash-room. The coal-blackness of his skin was no blacker than the suppressed rage in his heart.

"What in blazes kind of an animal is that Beagle, anyway?" he asked a brother coal-passer—a man named Collins. "Don't he ever act human at all—at no time?"

"You're workin' with a bad guy, bo," was all the consolation that Collins afforded him. "He ain't got a friend on the ship. Why don't you jump her?"

"What's the next port?" demanded Riley.

"Detroit—we make it at four o'clock."

The soft loveliness of the Detroit River was calming the coal passer's outraged spirit. He had eaten an excellent dinner of beefsteak and onions and mashed potatoes.

"Better than gandy grub," he mused. "This is sure a great life. If it wasn't for that bruisin' coal-heaver——"

The *North King* was drawing into her berth at Detroit. Riley stood at the forward gangway in readiness for his getaway as soon as the gang-plank should be lowered.

"Come and have a beer, Riley?"

It was the voice of Collins, the friendly coal-passer in the forward battery. After three large beers, Riley gritted his teeth and gave his impulse the reverse.

"Darned if I don't give her another chance," he said.

The *North King* nosed her way up the

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Detroit River, steamed at check through the Venetian shallows of the Lake of St. Clair and then passed through River St. Clair upon the sparkling bosom of Lake Huron. Riley endured the penance of another watch and was subsequently furious because he had failed to jump the ship in Detroit. He firmly resolved that nothing in the shape of beer, or any other alcoholic enticement, would shake his determination to get off at the next port; but when at eleven o'clock on the following morning he saw the Gibraltar-like Island of Mackinac rise out of the Straits he choked back his rage and determined to wait till the next mainland port should be reached.

This, however, at three o'clock in the afternoon, proved to be Harbor Springs—an exclusive Summer resort and also a desert spot, so the coal-passer Collins disgustedly informed him. Therefore the unfortunate Riley was constrained to face the prospect of still another watch under Beagle's tyranny.

On the following morning the *North King*, having crossed Lake Michigan, drew slowly into her berth in Milwaukee. Great expectations shone on the faces of the thirsty throng who had not been able to quench their fires in Harbor Springs. Milwaukee! The city of the big scoops and the world-famed brews! What glorious portent in the very name! The forward gangway was nearly choked with overalled forms waiting to go ashore.

As soon as the gang-plank had been run out Riley walked dejectedly up the street. He was utterly fagged out. He was thirsty. He had no money. He was sore at the world, at ships, at fire-holds and everything connected therewith. In particular he was sore at bull-necked Jim Beagle the fireman, whose insensate bullyings were the cause of his walking away from an otherwise good job.

He felt a slap on his shoulder and, turning, beheld the friendly, smiling face of Joe Budge.

"Buck up, me hearty! Don't be so glum! Come and have a beer," was the combined advice and invitation that the jolly boss fireman offered.

The absconding coal-passer hesitated. He disliked accepting Joe Budge's hospitality in view of what he had in mind. But he was undeniably dry down to the tips of his toe-nails. He had had no beer since the stop in Detroit and visions of a frothy mug leaped tantalizingly before his eyes. Presently he was sitting in a cosy little drink emporium with the boss fireman as host and a couple of brimming "scoops" on the table between them.

"Stick it out, Riley," was Budge's exhortation. "I know what's on your mind. You've got it hard just now, but—stick! If you jump us now you'll leave us in the lurch. Moreover, you're broke. If you tough it out till we get back to Buffalo, you'll be paid your whole trip money.

"I've been watchin' you, too. You'd make a good fireman. I'll give you the first vacancy I've got. Didn't you ever fire before?"

"Sure—locomotive."

"Thought so. You won't need much instruction. You'll make a good man."

The coal-passer drank reflectively. The beer and the boss fireman's praise combined to assuage his bitterness of spirit. Two more big beers followed the first and at last Riley squared his shoulders and took a fresh grip on life.

"I'll go you, boss," he said suddenly. "I've stuck so far—I'm game to the finish."

Budge looked approvingly over the muscular frame of his coal-passer and at last took him back to the ship.

IV

THE *North King* glided into her Chicago dock at noon. Many passengers and much baggage had to be discharged and received. The ship was scheduled to leave at four o'clock on the return trip. Four whole hours at the disposal of the crew!

But Riley, the harassed coal-passer, was very disconsolate. He stood once again at the forward gangway watching the firemen and the coal-passers and the deck hands, dressed in their good rags, hastening up town to enjoy a few hours' pastime. He regretted having given his word to Joe Budge to stick. This was a good gandy-dancing town, too, according to report; and it was probable that he could ship out on a track job without delay. Still, he felt, as an honest coal-passer should, that his word was his bond.

Thirsty? The word was inadequate to describe his condition. Three days of bondage in the fierce heat of the fire hold

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had fried nearly all the surplus moisture out of his system. His depleted interior was crying out for reinforcements. He saw Jim Beagle lumbering shoreward, his surly red visage rearing itself conspicuously above a white collar. He looked like a bull in harness.

The big fireman gave the coal-passer a contemptuous scowl as he passed by alone. He was a lonesome drinker, it was said, seeking neither friends nor intimates. Whatever personal grievances he harbored against life were reflected on his stormy face. With many forebodings Riley watched the big form disappearing in the distance. Probably he would acquire enough drink in the interval to make him even more domineering than usual on the next watch.

"Oh, Riley! You don't need to be dry while I've got money."

The coal-passer Collins was becoming quite friendly. Riley and he went to a certain establishment called "Hinky Dink's," that appears to be known wherever ramblers ramble. It was celebrated for its long brass bar, the multitude of its patrons and the ease wherewith the unsophisticated could be relieved of surplusage in the shape of change or carelessly guarded beverage.

Hinky Dink's establishment was a-flutter with the usual Saturday afternoon revelry. The two coal-passers saw several of the fire room crew of the *North King* busily engaged in "mopping 'em up"—acquiring plenteous hides' full of moisture for the return trip. Conspicuous among them was the big form of the bully, Beagle, who appeared to be drinking alone. Riley felt uneasy at the proximity of his persecutor and suggested a place at the lower end of the bar, to which his companion readily assented. While drinking their beer they overheard part of a conversation being carried on by two men standing beside them.

"What's big 'Bull' Beagle doin' nowadays? First I've seen him for a long time."

"I hear he's shovelin' smoke on the *North King*. Smoke shovelin' used to be his game before he become a 'white hope'."

"Good place for the big stiff. 'Lanky Kelly' landed a good punch when he put him out o' the ring an' settled his white hopes. That big cheese Beagle never was no good, anyway. But he had lots of 'em guessin' till Lanky finished him in the first round."

The two men laughed. The coal-passers exchanged glances.

"Let's beat it to some other joint," suggested Collins.

"These Chicago guys don't seem to value Beagle's scrappin' abilities very high, do they?" said Riley as they passed out of the bar room. "Maybe he ain't such a bruiser after all. I ain't goin' to weaken."

V

ON THE lower fan-tail of the *North King* craps and poker were in full sway. It was half-past seven and the Summer twilight was fast deepening into night. The ship was plowing swiftly through Lake Michigan on her way to Milwaukee. Little knots of firemen, deckhands, coal-passers and mess-men laughed and swore and wooed the Goddess of Chance. All felt merry—alcoholically merry, for the most part—on account of their four hours' sojourn in the port of Chicago. Money and dice and cards were scattered over the deck and the eager-faced participants were straining their eyes to prolong the play. It was getting so dark that they could scarcely see.

Jim Beagle was in a crap game with several firemen and coal-passers. Stripped to the waist ready to go on watch, he paraded his bulky masculinity before the eyes of all. His grossness of speech and deportment were obviously eclipsed only by the grossness of his egotism. That he was rather the worse for liquor was evident to the most casual eye.

Collins, the coal-passer, was winning in the game. A twenty-dollar bill belonging to him lay on the deck, held to its place by a tiny pile of silver. The little ring of gamblers snapped their fingers excitedly and called loud exhortations to the rattling dice, of which the little black dots could hardly be read in the gathering darkness. Suddenly the coarse voice of Jim Beagle was heard bellowing—

"The skipper!"

There was a frightened, general craning of necks toward the companionway, where a uniformed figure stood nonchalantly surveying the scene.

"It's only the new steward, boys!" grinned that worthy reassuringly. "Go ahead with your game."

The gamblers turned again toward their

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dice—but Collins's twenty-dollar bill had disappeared.

"Where's my money?" cried the losing coal-passer.

"Ast yer buddy there—he c'n tell ya," said Beagle with a malicious grin, pointing toward Riley, who stood directly behind Collins.

The latter looked reproachfully at his shipmate.

"Give the guy his money, you ——!" cried a hot-headed fireman, advancing upon Riley.

Tom Riley's frank face blazed with indignation.

"Collins, I ain't got your money!" he cried vehemently. "I believe that big stiff took it himself when he yelled that the skipper was lookin'!"

There was a moment's awed silence.

"What? Me, y'u mean?" roared Beagle. "Y'u coal passin' ——!"

The ex-pugilist made a rush for his coal-passer. Riley tried to avoid him, but the fireman's big bulk bore him suddenly back against the low taffrail. Beagle swung and landed on the point of Riley's jaw. The latter, in an endeavor to avoid the blow, had leaned far over the taffrail in such a manner that the force of the punch somersaulted his body backward into Lake Michigan, twenty feet below.

For a moment the little group of gamblers was dumb with the suddenness of the accident.

"Man overboard!" cried somebody at last.

Then followed a quick scurrying about for a life preserver. A ring life-buoy with a line attached hung just to starboard of the companion-way. Half a dozen hands grappled for it at the same instant. In the darkness they became entangled in the line and before they were able to extricate themselves and cast the buoy overboard the ship had made nearly a quarter of a mile.

"There's a self-lightin' buoy on the promenade deck on the port side, aft of the 'midships gangway!" cried a deck hand.

A rush was accordingly made for this; but the self-igniting lamp failed to ignite when it struck the water, as per schedule.

In the meantime a member of the crew had sped forward to the pilot-house and notified the officer on watch, who promptly signaled two bells to the engine-room. At this command the engineer officer on watch quickly reversed his engines and the ship began to back water. This maneuver, however, had not been effected without considerable delay; and in the interval the *North King*, which had been speeding along at twenty knots an hour, had made nearly a half-mile on her northward course.

The boatswain then mustered a boat's crew. They proceeded to the boat deck and set about lowering a life-boat from its davits. A rather landlubberly crew did not tend to expedite matters and the old salt water boatswain relieved himself of much profanity before the craft finally struck the water.

Half an hour later the boat's crew returned to the ship. The boatswain reported that he had picked up the two ring life-buoys, but that the unfortunate coal-passer could not be found and had therefore probably gone down.

The *North King* thereupon resumed full speed on her northern course.

VI

AFTER the first shock of sudden immersion had left him, Tom Riley came to the surface, spat the water from his mouth and began to swim. The *North King's* lights twinkled rapidly farther and farther away to the north. Being a landsman and unfamiliar with the workings of a ship; and not realizing what a lengthy procedure it is to halt a big ship under a full head of steam, he felt that he had been abandoned to his fate. On account of the darkness he had not observed the two ring-buoys that were cast over the side; and the brilliant calcium flare of the self-igniter had failed to appear.

The coal-passer, however, was a swimmer; and accordingly he did the perfectly natural thing to do under the circumstances. He struck valiantly out for the distant Wisconsin shore. The darkness that lay on the water was somewhat terrifying, but nevertheless the shore lights twinkled invitingly across the black expanse and toward them he turned a resolute face and swam with a will.

Had he lingered in the vicinity, he would soon have seen the light in the *North King's* life-boat dancing about on the surface of the lake. He might even have heard the halooings of the crew in search of him. As it was, however, these sounds were indiscernible above the plash of the wave

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crests about his ears as he swam low in the water to husband his strength.

A two-mile swim in fresh water is a task to tax the energy of a strong man who is unused to much of that particular form of exercise. It was approaching midnight when Riley crawled out upon the Wisconsin shore. Once out of the water, his remaining strength suddenly left him. He lay for half an hour, scarcely able to move. Vigor seeped slowly back into his veins, but not until he had become chilled to the bone. A pair of overalls and a shirt—his uniform for the forthcoming watch—were all the garments excepting shoes that he wore.

As soon as he was able to walk the shivering coal-passer made his way inland. Out of the first group of buildings that loomed ahead of him in the darkness he singled the familiar outline of a barn. The ground door was closed and locked, but the door of the loft stood open. Riley's chilled limbs spurred him into quick action. He clambered desperately up the door frame and swung himself into the warm, hay-filled loft.

At day-break he emerged from the warm burrow and started to hike across the pasture land toward the West. Presently he reached a macadam road running north and south—evidently a thoroughfare between Chicago and Milwaukee. Riley walked south. Bareheaded, with his hair matted and full of hayseed and his overalls and shirt badly wrinkled, he was certainly a weird and suspicious-looking figure. Dogs bayed at him from verandas and porches; and some even had the temerity to rush after him, although they paused discreetly at the sight of the stout brogan that always was drawn back ready for their reception. Motorists and occupants of equipages stared curiously at him as he passed by.

Noon arrived, accompanied by the usual hunger pangs. Riley reflected dismally that, had he been aboard the *North King*, he would have been scrubbing himself in readiness for a midday clean-up at the mess-table. Even the memory of the unutterable Beagle could not efface that delightful reminiscence of the coal heavers' menu.

The ex-coal passer spurred his weary legs dutifully along the road and presently drew himself abreast of an establishment that seemed to be foreign to the nature of the farms and suburban homes with which the locality was dotted. A dwelling that had apparently at some previous time done duty as a farmhouse, now seemed to be invested with an air of activity that bespoke no affiliation with rural pursuits. A punching-bag dangled from its platform on the wide veranda. Several men in jerseys and sweaters were lounging about. Delightful odors issued from a lean-to kitchen at the rear of the building and were wafted across the road by the lake breeze. Riley sniffed, hesitated and at last entered.

"Gents, I ain't a bum," he apologized, discounting his curious appearance with a sheepish grin, "but I got up against a little tough luck. If you've got anything to eat that ain't workin', I'll do some work for it. Cuttin' wood, or anything you say."

Riley paused in his appeal.

"Hey, 'Lanky'! Want to give this guy a hand-out? Says he's willin' to cut wood."

The man addressed as Lanky was tall and muscular. He had a square jaw and a pug nose, but the eyes that he bent upon the unfortunate Riley were clear and smiling.

"Where ya come from, Jack?" he drawled, looking appraisingly over the coal-passer's well-knit frame.

"Come out of the lake. Fell off a ship and swum ashore."

Everybody laughed, including Riley himself.

"Another set-up, Mose!" called Lanky. "This guy'll cut some wood fer ya after dinner."

A black face peered out of the kitchen window with a white flash of grinning enlightenment.

"An' if ya stick around fer a while, we might be able to use ya," concluded Lanky, winking at his companions.

VII

TOM RILEY was duly installed as porter in the training-quarters of Lanky Kelly, who was getting into form for a championship bout. Notwithstanding his humble station as hewer of wood and drawer of water, the ex-coal-passer's frank personality and his willingness to make himself generally useful won him the good will of trainers, sparring partners and even the pugilist himself.

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"I don't figger on enterin' ya in the heavyweight class, but I may as well put ya hep to a few defensive tactics, son," volunteered the fighter one day.

Accordingly, after he had finished with his sparring partners, he would often good-naturedly try the mettle of his husky porter, who gradually became able to assimilate or avoid most of his punches. Lanky became interested.

"Son," he asked paternally on one occasion, "what ya been doin' all yer life? Didn't ya ever know ya could scrap a little?"

Riley had led the simple life of a railroader and he told Lanky the short history, concluding with his recent experience aboard the *North King*.

"Bull Beagle, hey? So that's where the big stiff is keepin' hisself? An' ya let him git away with that, did ya?"

Lanky Kelly reflected.

"Come into my dressin'-room," he said after a pause. "Now strip!" he commanded.

"O Mike!" called the fighter to his trainer a moment afterward. "Come here! Run yer mitts over this guy. Not so bad—hey?"

Thereafter the instruction that the big fighter gave Riley embraced offensive tactics as well. The porter suffered black eyes, bruised cheeks and battered ribs; and while this constant pummeling contributed to his body an admirable toughness, still his ability to elude such punishment grew steadily greater.

"Son, ya won't make a fighter," concluded Lanky one day after a "go" with his porter.

"I know it," replied Riley with a sheepish grin. "I'm only a workin' stiff."

"But," went on the pugilist with a curious glint in his eyes, "that don't mean that ya can't scrap. The trouble is ya won't scrap unless ya git mad—that's the only diff'rence between ya an' a real fighter."

Riley had no ambitions toward prowess in the ring. He was a simple working man and he realized the fact well. The lazy sporting life in the training-quarters was making him restless. Every Saturday morning he watched for a dark haze on the northern horizon. This presently took the form of a blanket of smoke above a spot of white that magnified swiftly into the outlines of a big white ship speeding southward on the Chicago course. How beautiful she looked as she skimmed along over the green lake water! Whenever sudden spurts of black smoke rose from her funnels Riley would exclaim with a sigh—

"Well, the boys are givin' her another fire!"

The ex-coal-passer could scarcely understand the thing himself. Notwithstanding the bullying fireman, the brutal labor and the fierce heat, he found that he was actually looking back with a sense of homesickness at the life he had led aboard ship. What was this mysterious attraction, anyway? Was it—well, somehow it was a life of action. That was what best expressed the idea. It was a man's life. The big, glaring fire-boxes, insatiate in their demand for food—the agile, sweating firemen—the dull roar of the fires and the near thunder of the ship's machinery—the strife, the reek and the fume of the place—and then a sudden and complete change.

There were the sweet reactions of coming off watch and the refreshing delights of the shower bath and a yawning appetite for the mess table and a pipe and the clear lake breeze on deck. Lastly—the utter oblivion of his bunk, where his exhausted frame was reinvigorated for the next grind.

Moreover, there were the frequent ports of call and the attendant opportunities for quenching one's thirst. The beautiful waterscapes of the Great Lakes and the constantly unfolding panoramas afforded by the winding rivers added likewise their quota of compensations.

Tom Riley looked across at the *North King* speeding south to the port of Chicago, and sighed:

"That's the life for me!"

"Why don't ya go back to her, son?" grinned Lanky Kelly, stepping across the veranda and standing at his elbow.

Riley reflected a moment.

"I've got half a trip's pay comin' to me," he said at last; "although I s'pose they think I'm dead. Anyway, there probably ain't a vacancy on her. Then there's Jim Beagle—him and me ain't exactly what you'd call friends."

"Bull Beagle, hey? Is that all that's worryin' ya? Ya been a purty straight guy around this here joint an' us guys haven't sized ya up fer a sneak thief. I've got an extry pair o' pants an' a sweater ya can have, son. Put 'em on. Hey, Mike! Crank up yer jitney! We're goin' to town."

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VIII

JOE BUDGE stood at the forward gangway scanning the faces of the returning black gang. It was half past three and the *North King* was due to sail at four. It was his duty to ascertain that all hands were aboard prior to departure. His firemen and coal-passers straggled back by twos and threes. Suddenly he caught sight of a familiar figure coming up the gang-plank. Budge stared and rubbed his eyes.

"Blast me if it ain't Riley!" he cried. "Why, boy, we thought you went to Davy Jones long ago!"

Riley's former shipmates crowded around in congratulatory excitement. He found himself trying simultaneously to shake hands with every one and to explain the miracle of his being still on earth.

"Riley, I ain't got a vacancy, I'm sorry to say. But the purser's got some money belongin' to you," said the boss fireman after the hubbub had died down.

Riley went aft to the purser's office in company with Joe Budge and was paid his half-trip's wages. Coming back again to the gangway he met Collins, who had already heard the news. The latter did not hesitate to grasp the hand of his old shipmate.

"Did you get back your twenty?" asked Riley suddenly.

"No—but I don't believe you're the one that trimmed me," replied Collins with a cautious look about him.

"Is Beagle aboard?"

"No. I saw him in Hinky Dink's. He was there when I left—pretty well stewed."

A tall, raw-boned individual with a pug nose, wearing a sweater and cap, had meanwhile walked up the gang-plank.

"You ain't a member o' the crew, are you?" demanded Budge, mistaking the newcomer for a prospective stowaway.

"Me? No— I'm jist wit' a friend o' mine—Riley. Are ya goin' sailin', son?"

"The boss says there ain't a vacancy for me, Lanky."

Collins looked swiftly into his friend's eyes.

"Is it—" he began excitedly.

"It's Lanky Kelly," said somebody in an awestruck whisper.

The big prize-fighter surveyed the group with indulgent amusement.

"Riley," said Collins, "you've sure got backin', ain't you? You know I ain't a squealer, but I ought to tell you that the skipper had me and Beagle on the carpet, and Beagle swore it was you that took my money and that's why he plugged you."

"He told that lie to the skipper, too?"

Little fires of anger kindled suddenly in the ex-coal-passer's eyes. He whispered to Lanky and the latter frowned.

"He shoves ya overboard an' then gives ya a black eye after he thinks yer a goner, hey? Is he aboard, son?"

"Not yet. Collins says he saw him in Hinky Dink's."

The two men walked down the gang plank, Lanky's conspicuous form followed by a score of interested eyes. Among the small crowd of spectators on the pier stood a policeman. The pugilist walked over and shook hands with him.

" 'Lo, Mac."

" 'Lo, Lanky. How's the comin' champeen?"

Lanky smiled. He talked for a moment with the officer, who stroked his mustache thoughtfully and finally nodded.

"Nothin' raw," promised Lanky reassuringly. "Jist adjustin' a little pers'nal matter."

IX

JIM BEAGLE was late. He had tarried longer than usual in front of the long brass bar and the result of his prolonged potations smoldered in his eyes as he lumbered somewhat unsteadily along the pier toward the *North King*. He knew that the skipper had the reputation of waiting for no man. At four o'clock precisely the big white flier would cast off her lines and speed away on her northward course. It was already about three minutes to four and the crew stood ready to haul in the gang-planks.

As Beagle came abreast of the ship, threading his way among those who lingered for the purpose of waving their adieus to departing voyagers, he paused in surprize before a tall figure that suddenly confronted him.

" 'Lo, Bull."

The very quietness of the greeting sounded ominous. The fireman stared uncertainly. He did not like the look that he saw in his old ring adversary's eye.

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"Why— y'u an' me's quits—ain't we, Lanky?"

"Sure—I jist want to interjooce ya to a friend o' mine—one o' yer old friends, too, Bull."

Beagle's red face lost a shade of its color. He looked at his former coal-passer, who stood beside the pugilist, and smothered an exclamation of dismay. A sudden warning roar from the *North King's* siren ended his indecision. He swallowed hard, showed his teeth in a sickly grin and muttered:

"I'll meet yer friend some other time, Lanky. I got business aboard the boat."

The big fireman stepped forward but Riley quickly barred his further progress. The ex-coal-passer's clear and honest face was suffused with the dull flush of anger.

"Beagle," he said vehemently, "you did everything you could to get me in wrong on that ship. First, you tried to bluff me out of the job; then you tried to queer me with the bunch; furthermore you lied to the skipper about me. You and me's goin' to have it out right now."

"So that's y'ur game, hey?" demanded the fireman sourly. "Two agen one—that ain't square, Lanky."

"Square?" sneered the pugilist. "When was ya ever square, Beagle? But don't ya worry—I got too much reppytashun to take on yer own dirty charact'ristics. This li'l' argyment's goin' to be on the level between ya an' yer friend here. I'm only actin' in the capac'ty o' ref'ree—see?"

"Git out o' my way!" roared Beagle, attempting to pass Riley.

"Beagle, you've got to fight," replied the latter determinedly.

The fireman swung viciously at the coal-passer and the fight was on. A short, imperative blast came from the ship. The crew began hauling in the gang-planks, working half-heartedly, with their eyes eagerly directed to the scene of hostilities on shore. The *North King's* rails were lined with passengers looking down from the saloon and promenade decks. Many of the female tourists screamed, but most of the males grinned delightedly at the battle unexpectedly staged by the two heavyweights. The captain came out on the bridge and roared through his megaphone:

"Budge! Get your fireman aboard!"

The boss fireman sprang to the pier and approached the arena, but Lanky Kelly's long arms swept a wide circle around the combatants and he cried warningly:

"Hands off! I'm ref'reein' this bout!"

The boss fireman did not appear to be in the least disconcerted. There was a peculiar light in his eye as he looked up toward the captain and helplessly shook his head. He could not linger and watch the fight at close range, as he longed to do. His duty called him aboard, so he sprang back to the gangway.

"Why don't they call the policeman?" moaned several women on the pier, wringing their hands. "There was one here a moment ago—where could he have gone? They're never around when they're needed."

"The tall guy that's refereein' the scrap is Lanky Kelly," was the awesome word whispered among the group of watching men. Accordingly they gave the proceedings plenty of room.

A bare-fisted fight between two heavyweights is a vicious affair. There was too much animosity between the battlers to call forth much science. Riley was quicker with his leg work, but his punches were lighter. The men crouched and circled and rushed; they lunged and jabbed and uppercut. Lumps and bruises were beginning to appear on their swelling faces. From their noses dripped blood. Riley seemed to be gradually winding Beagle whose alcoholic stimulus failed fast.

"Time!" yelled Lanky suddenly. "Break, ya——"

The referee looked anxiously over his shoulder. He saw the *North King* beginning to move slowly out from the pier. The dock men were loosing the ship's lines from the bitts and preparing to cast her off. In response to Kelly's command the fighters paused, breathing heavily.

"Ya'll git it in this round, Beagle," cried Lanky, looking at the fireman with a fiercely exulting gaze. "Too bad we ain't got more time. I finished ya in the first round, but the kid'll trim ya in the second—see?"

Beagle glared for a moment through bloodshot eyes at the grim face of his old adversary and read the coming fate that was written there. Then he turned to meet the coal-passer's rush. The fireman began to fight savagely. He was much heavier than Riley and he punished the lad severely, but the latter gritted his teeth and struck back at his foe.

Riley broke through Beagle's guard and

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drove his left hard to the solar plexus. Beagle wavered, but countered with his right to the coal-passer's jaw. The force of this blow spun Riley around somewhat; but as he recovered himself he swung back with the full weight of his body behind a long straight jab to the fireman's chin. Beagle tottered and sat down.

"Beat it, son!" ordered Lanky. "Here comes a cop!"

A uniformed figure could be seen coming along the pier at a run.

"Thank God!" murmured the little group of half-hysterical women fervently.

The *North King's* lines had now been cast off and were being hauled aboard. The siren emitted a parting toot. Riley, his face covered with blood and body palpitating with the excitement and joy of conquest, waved farewell to his former shipmates gazing eagerly from the gangways of the departing ship. He could see the genial face of Joe Budge in the forward gangway. Why——

Budge actually seemed to be beckoning to him! No wonder—he was short a fire man.

"Beat it, ya simp!" repeated Kelly hoarsely. "Ain't ya wise?"

Light suddenly entered Riley's confused intelligence. He ran to the edge of the pier and plunged unhesitatingly into the lake. A willing deck-hand let the long breast line trail out into the water; and while passengers cheered and waved their hands and the crew yelled themselves hoarse, Riley swam out and seized the end of the line, by means of which he was hauled swiftly through the water by a dozen strong hands that a moment afterward reached down and pulled him to safety.

Beagle wiped the blood from his face and scowled at Kelly and the policeman. The latter escorted the two heavyweights from the scene of the recent disturbance; but when they had reached a quiet corner he said—

"Anybody going to make a complaint about this, Lanky?"

"Naw—I guess Bull don't want to advertise this little argyment—hey, Bull?"

The ex-fireman shook his head disgustedly.

"What's the use?" he growled.

"Much obliged, Mac," grinned Kelly to the policeman.

After the officer had departed Lanky Kelly looked speculatively at his former opponent.

"Bull," he said with a grin, "that's the first time I ever saw ya scrap. Ya'd have put it over the kid if he'd been alone—but me bein' there tipped yer balance. If ya'd have put up a scrap like that wit' me instead o' throwin' the rag in the first round, ya wouldn't have queered yerself in the ring."

Kelly paused and reflected.

"If ya'd cut some o' the hard stuff an' git back into form, I might arrange a little backin'—but we c'n talk about that some other time. That kid c'n use his mitts, too—but he's got to git mad before he c'n scrap. He's better off where he is. He's too straight fer this game."

September 30th is the date for the next issue of *Adventure*.

The days to look for *Adventure* on the stands are the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month, with allowance for February.

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GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

by Stanton C Lapham

IT WAS nine-thirty and faint daylight. "Cassiar Bill" pulled his head in like a mud-turtle, closed the door and puffed in one shivering breath—

" 'Sourdough's' comin' — she's cold." Adding speculatively, "He must have camped at the Klondike, to make her this early."

Straddling awkwardly on his six-foot webs, "Sourdough Pete" came switch-backing up the hill toward the cabin overlooking Hunker Creek, adjoining the recently created Hydraulic Reserve.

Pete was stopping with us while thawing a prospect hole on Last Chance. He was three days overdue from Dawson, and Cassiar had hourly eyed the trail down Hunker for his return.

The Government's withdrawal of rich placer ground from location on lower Hunker had come with a jolt that was hard for prospectors to understand. Was this shut-out to be the policy of the gold commissioner's office? Pete had been in Dawson to investigate the injustice of the recent ruling and to offer a location on Bear Creek.

The news from Dawson, the greatest gold camp in the world, barely trickled from Pete who was indifferent to the tiptoe expectancy of his auditors.

Fortunes were being won, lost and bartered in the flick of an eye. The pace was swift and the sky the limit. Men crawled into sleeping-bags, broke, homesick, frostbitten; awakening in the morning to find that the fire they had left in the bottom of a hole had thawed into a million dollar paystreak. A patch of moose pasture that an old miner had wished on to a credulous Swede, for sixty dollars and a bottle of poor whisky, was yielding three hundred to the pan on bedrock; while adjoining the "Swede-luck" claim, a fifty thousand dollar location drew a blank.

"The country is gettin' so the Almighty don't figure no more in Alaska than He does out in God's country," said Pete morosely. "I am playin' my hand to a show-down, but when a gent's been livin' in a he country where everybody's supposed to be everybody's friend, why, he ain't raisin' any bets when they stack the cards on him." It was evident that some new-schemed injustice had touched Pete in particular.

Knotted in the end of a sack Pete drew from beneath his parka were six onions and four potatoes, he had carried inside his shirt to keep from freezing.

"Me and Bill Leggett lifted 'em at Chuck Martin's," he announced, dividing the tidbits. "Cheap at two-fifty per each.

"Chuck has quit dealin' over at the North Star. Says there ain't any money in blackjack. He's set up a grub counter in the Malimoot and is makin' dried apple pies. Sellin' 'em at a dollar a slice, six slices to the pie."

With gleeful chuckles Pete related how he had come "rollin' in off the trail with an ingrowin' taste for pie," and had "set in the pie game" for seventeen slices, even money,

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one ounce. Flour was two dollars a pound and no flour. He had purchased one length of stovepipe for four ounces.

"Yes, sir, if it wasn't for civilization growin' so careless with other folks' property, helpin' its hand from the whole deck and playin' marked cards, she'd be a he camp," reflected Pete.

"Why this conversin' in parables?" inquired Cassiar. "What about these intrudin' influences a-hinderin' any old ptarmigan what wants to thaw a hole to bedrock?"

Pete rumpled his mop of iron-gray hair and cocked one eye at Cassiar.

"To be precise, Cassiar, the gold commissioner has invented some more compound felonies for the purpose of discouragin' too much activity by miners who are pirootin' around the landscape, itchin' to know what's on bedrock besides mastodon bone. When I tried to locate that ground on Last Chance, the bloomin'-blita-doun't-ch-yu-knou of a clerk mushes into the back room and wah-wahs with the big tyee. After a bit he comes out and instructs me that all ground on Last Chance is reserved to the Crown. Then they regales me to the effect that my location on Bear Creek, seein' it's number six above discovery, loses again. All the even numbers bein' withdrawn for the Dominion. The Klondike River bottom is reserved for the Northwest Territory. The latest little cunnin' thing, is that they are goin' to raise the gold tax to twenty per cent.

"The idea of this Hunker Creek Hydraulic Reserve is to keep the miners off, pretendin' the ground is so lean that it won't pay for common sluicin'. Why, I know where there is shallow spots on that reserve so rich that a pan of wash looks like a jewelry store."

AFTER George Carmack had dipped that historic bucket of water from Bonanza Creek, with the yellow nuggets on the bottom shinin' in his eyes, Pete had come up from Circle City, where he had been working pay on Preacher Creek. He made an early location on Eldorado, but the big pay only clipped a corner of his claim. After months of toil and the expenditure of all he had made, the bedrock on another location proved steep—only a few heavy chunks and "pancakes" stuck. Now the ground everywhere was plastered with locations and being withdrawn from entry. Pete's opportunity for making a strike seemed at an end.

"Come within twelve feet of bein' a millionaire once," asserted Pete. "However, I don't feel so gosh-a-mighty indisposed at not goin' on through that false bedrock and strikin' it."

"You never can tell," remarked Cassiar. "You got to make sure you're down to bedrock. You can't find it on top of slides. Then you got to watch the mineral signs, and figure the slant of strata, and the dykes and nature of rock. The whole thing is formations. In a true mineralized zone you can trace gold to the mother lode, where the glaciers pounded out the mineral like a stamp mill, then the water sluiced it down hill. When you get above water level you're above the placer."

Cassiar was on one of his reiterated dissertations on mineralized zones and the theory of gold deposits.

"Yes, sir, locatin' virgin gold is like readin' stars or takin' observations, or buildin' a fire under a boiler to make steam. If you know minerals and the district, all you got to do is to follow——"

Cassiar did not complete the sentence. Pete had tipped his coal-oil-box chair against the wall and was beating a resounding *th-rump,-th-rump,-th-r-r-r-umpity, rump, rump, rump,* on the bottom of the box with such force that he knew his every word was being utterly ignored. He spluttered:

"If you're so all-fired sure that what I hold on locatin' gold ain't worth a parboiled lima bean, ask yourself what's in them high hills out yonder?"

Cassiar extended a bony forefinger toward the steep hillside.

"Why don't you climb a thousand feet above runnin' water and start punchin' holes for wash gravel, on that mountain?"

"Wah-wahin' on book minin', are you, Cassiar?" Pete retorted. "Huntin' for pay ain't exactly like mixin' vinegar and sody to make a fizz. I am playin' the statements of scripture wide open and leavin' the bet ride. It says: 'Silver is in ledges, but gold is where you find it.' I don't recollect the name of the gent that prophesied that, but it ain't requirin' any theological education to guess that he was plumb correct in every particular. That's inspiration. You can bet your mucklucks on its

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developin' true every time you punch a hole to bedrock."

"Which include high hills like them out there, as good placer ground, I suppose?" replied Cassiar contemptuously.

"It don't say anything to the contrary, does it?" returned Pete. "The nature of silver is ledges. But the Almighty only knows where you are goin' to find gold."

The argument came to an unexpected end. Pete's free-hand exposition of scripture was a silencer to Cassiar's volubility.

IN A few days Pete packed his outfit over from Last Chance. He made another unsuccessful attempt to locate a claim; this time on a low bench at the foot of the hill adjoining the reserve.

Apparently undiscouraged by the Government's rejection of his locations, Pete continued prospecting in the locality of the reserve. Cassiar regarded Pete's operations with feigned suspicion.

"Pete is just tendin' to his jewelry shop down there on the reserve, and he is goin' to be his own best customer," laughed Cassiar.

"I have been losin' so long that I like it," Pete reflected, as he discussed the injustice of the situation. "There's some things worse can happen to a man than not strikin' it. When I observe the antics of most Klondike millionaires, seems as though a million has the same effect on a gent in here as it does outside. There's 'Swift Water Bill'; what Bill needs money won't buy, which is plenty common with most gents who are well fixed. If Bill was poor you could feel sorry, but bein' rich, why, real he men just laugh.

"When I think of what dust does for most gents that's got plenty I says to myself: 'You old musher, you been fifteen years in Alaska, and broke most of the time, but you ain't a durn fool yet. You ain't been makin' profit out of the work and hunger and rags, and maybe the shame of women and little kids. What's yourn is clean dust, dug out of the muck with your own hands, and there ain't a drop of blood or a tear on an ounce of it. God only knows what a rich pay-streak might do to you.' No, sir, there's times when I am plumb proud of my poverty."

For a month Pete continued to scout around Hunker Creek bottom, meantime indulging in a profitless stampede to Sulphur Creek. Occasionally he washed a pan of dirt in a tub in the cabin. Where he had packed the dirt from or what were the results of the tests, he did not reveal.

"The old tom-cod is growin' plumb curious as to how the Government is goin' to work out them jewelry spots." Cassiar closed one eye solemnly. "You better unload some of that illuminatin' conversation on the commissioner, about gold bein' where you find it; only maybe some of them rich spots he won't even find unless he sluices right soon."

"No, you are clean off the pay-streak again, Cassiar," replied Pete, "There's chicken-feed in them spots you could sort out with your fingers, but I ain't injurin' my eyes lookin' them over. Right now I'm persuin' one of your book-minin' leads. I am plumb converted to the idea of follerin' gold like trackin' a wounded grizzly. Looks to me when the Almighty run out a boilin' of gold, He plants it in likely places and then puts up a sign, readin', 'Dig here'."

Cassiar remarked dryly:

"It ain't in human nature for a gent to overlook nuggets he sees layin' around lose. They make your fingers itch. I ain't hangin' it out as a warnin', but I understand one of them squirrel-parka gents from the gold commissioner's office is guardin' the reserve right close."

Pete smiled tolerantly and retorted:

"I been bettin' my mortal coil against violent weather and bad trails and mosquitoes and years when the grub was so scarce that we stewed our mucklucks; and I ain't allowed circumstances nor Cassiar's sody biscuits to get me yet. Withdrawin' rich placer ground ain't exactly circumstances. It's like cornerin' wheat and then rakin' in the graft. But Alaska is a sportin' community where the chances is, and a gent's bound to play his cards as they run."

To Cassiar's questioning as to how he expected to win against reserves and rejected filings, Pete replied:

"The noble and eddifyin' accomplishment of conversation ain't a goin' to hang its head or perish from the earth while your are livin', Cassiar. It ain't healthful to know too many things, especially when most of 'em, likely as not, is just talk."

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LIGHT and warmth swung up from the south. Streamers of geese wedged northward across the sky; evading vanguards of arctic Summer. Flumes and sluice-boxes were set to wash billions in virgin gold from dumps of yellow-specked earth.

With lengthening days came rumors of sniping on the Reserve. High-grading had been done where a selected pan of dirt might yield a hundred or more.

The mystery of Pete's wanderings deepened when he erected a cabin on the hill overlooking the forbidden ground.

"That there mansion of Pete's, a-stickin' on to that hill by its eyebrows looks like a cross between a chink laundry and a woodpecker's nest," commented Cassiar. "Pete's a losin' all his sociability too. Looks like he is plannin' to forsake society and let the whole diggin's go plumb to the bonfire."

It was several weeks after the event before all the facts of Pete's arrest for high-grading on the Reserve were known to his friends. Cassiar was wrought up to a proper height of virtuous indignation when he heard of what had happened.

"The old he ptarmigan ain't never batted an eye, just been sittin' cold for a month. Why, if the ornery tom-cod had 'a' yapped once we'd 'a' trailed down there and held a necktie party for that squirrel-parka gent."

On a warm day when the streams were bank full, Pete had been discovered panning wash in Hunker Creek on the Reserve. The place was convenient to his cabin on the hill above and near the fraction he had attempted to file on.

When the guard had suddenly appeared on the opposite side of Hunker, Pete was panning from a sack of dirt beside him. The spotter had been watching his operations for an hour. Questioned by the guard, Pete continued washing the dirt in the gold-pan, replying:

"Well, you can see I ain't stuffin' bolognas nor any of the other things against the law for miners to amuse themselves doin'. You won't need a spy glass and dictionary to make a long shot as to my present occupation."

Pete gave the gold-pan a flirt and extracted several objects from the bottom of the pan. He was aware that he was on forbidden ground, but more to the point at that critical juncture, he was sure that the spotter couldn't cross the deep stream to his side except by a foot-bridge a half a quarter up-stream. The guard knew that he had caught Pete red-handed, but that fact was modified by fact number two; that the swollen stream intervened between him and any tangible evidence of high-grading he could lay hands on.

As Pete panned he indulged in a withering flow of sarcasm about a "little hand-organ of a nickel-skinning Government interfering with the catch-as-catch-can rights of miners to gold where the Almighty planted it, free-for-all."

Pete leveled another pan of dirt in the water, sloshed the gravel from the surface and invited the officer to come over and take a look at his jewelry shop. When the guard arrived on Pete's side of Hunker the inevitable had occurred; even the sack from which he had filled the gold-pan with dirt had disappeared.

The officer informed him that he was under arrest and that his operations had been under investigation for a month. After an hour's vain search to locate the spot from which Pete might have dug the pay gravel, the guard was ready to start for Dawson. Pete proposed that he come in to the commissioner's office the next day. To the arrangement the guard finally consented, provided that Pete would put up sufficient dust to assure his appearance for trial. The idea that any amount of dust was of more value than his word, filled Pete with unutterable disgust. Too exasperated to speak, he headed down the trail, the guard at his heels.

After crossing the Klondike, Pete and his captor overtook Bill Leggett going toward town. In picturesque language Pete explained the situation.

"Just washin' the dirt off my hands—durned riley the water in Hunker is now, too, so much sluicin' goin' on."

Leggett assured the guard that Pete would certainly appear in Dawson the following day; but the guard was in no humor to allow him to go on his own recognizance.

"I wouldn't trust one of them striped-backed skunks in the commissioner's office as far as I can smell 'em," ejaculated Pete. "I'll give you a poke of dust, Leggett, if you'll see that none of 'em has a chance to graft out of it, and I'll come to town any time they want me."

He produced a poke half filled with nuggets. They estimated the value at not less

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than nine hundred. Leggett examined the gold, admiring its high quality. Then the two Klondikers indulged in gleeful horse-play, as to where the nuggets could possibly have come from.

"Don't look like Bonanza or Eldorado does it? By them dark stains I don't reckon none of it come from upper Hunker neither," volunteered Pete.

The bail was acceptable and Pete was to appear when notified.

After swapping news of the latest doings, Pete pulled out another poke of dust and straightway he and Leggett were hilariously concerned in the mysterious fact that the poke did not contain an ounce of fine dust. Pete explained:

"Fine dust is growin' scarce, and then there is no many rich spots where the nuggets, like them boys—" he juggled a half-dozen in his hand—is right at the moss roots. Right comical now ain't it Bill, how the heavy stuff lays on top? You see, Bill I am growin' shaky in my old age; that, with Cassiar's sody biscuits, makes me nervous-like. I can't pan close like I used to. The fine dust sloshes out of the pan when I am cleanin' up, and just naturally leaves a lot of these no-account yaller-boys rattlin' around in the bottom."

They laughed jibingly at the idea of heavy gold on the surface.

Pete turned back toward Hunker, assuring the guard "he did hope they'd find that ornery malemiut pup as was snipin' on the Reserve."

"Now, young feller"—Pete eyed the officer with an expansive grin—you mush along with Leggett. There ain't a-goin' to be a bit of trouble for me to name him, the next time you mushes up this way."

For a month after Pete's apprehension, his movements were wrapped in darkness, if not in mystery. Evenings late—it was daylight until ten o'clock—he was often to be seen climbing the hill from Hunker toward the cabin. Meantime his trial had taken an unexpected slant. He found it one thing to keep mum and allow the gold commissioner to do the convicting, if he could, and quite another thing to be tried by a tribunal that was judge and law and that demanded he prove himself innocent.

"The old snow-bird is just trailin' 'em along," was Cassiar's explanation. "While they are guessin' where he got it and how he got it he'll hand-pick a few more yellow-boys to rattle in his poke. You can speculate your last ounce on it that Pete's got a few cards he ain't showin'. He's takin' a little breathin' spell and then he'll call for a new deck, and they'll have to shuffle 'em all over again."

To Pete Cassiar was not so optimistic.

"For a future convict"—Cassiar regarded his old friend critically—"you are lookin' as slick as a seal, Pete. You're growin' a figger like Grover Cleveland."

"That's because I am eatin' my own bread," replied Pete. "It's took four months to get your sody biscuits out of my disposition. Yes, sir, my digestion is mendin'."

"The trial's due about now, ain't it, Pete?" Cassiar was worried. "After the years of conspicuous poverty you and me has enjoyed together, and the game goin' against you recent, why, it's natural that I'd like to know how things is pannin'. I don't aim to be curious about them nuggets. Where you are obtainin' them shiners or how ain't any white man's business, but this trial looks like a bear-trap and you fast in it. You're doin' your own driftin', Pete, but we don't aim to allow 'em to put you on bread and water for takin' a few nuggets where the Almighty gave 'em to you. With this here Government you ain't got any more chance than a chekako buckin' faro in the malemoot saloon. Bein' right there on the reserve, cleanin' up them nuggets, and no alibi worth talkin' about, you got to say it don't look prosperous."

"No use hangin' out crape." Pete regarded Cassiar's mournful expression intently. "The only time I am sorry is before anything happens. Holdin' a funeral for yourself don't pan a color. With that poke of nuggets up for bail I am hopin' to hold 'em off another month; then they are welcome to put the whole diggin's in reserve. After bein' poisoned by them sody biscuits of yours for ten years it's plumb comical your bein' so particular about my feeding on bread and water."

Upon Pete's invitation to come up and learn what a hiyu pan of sourdough bread looked like, they climbed the hill together.

IN THE morning, after a survey of the niche on the side of which Pete's cabin perched precariously, Cassiar allowed he would "just ring in" and go down to Dawson, to see that they didn't play any more marked cards on Pete.

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Cassiar, complaining of the soda in the bread, and Pete arguing bitterly that "all mineral signs fail in Alaska; and gold is where you find it," they struck the trail for Dawson.

Swinging around the hill above Dawson, they paused to look at the five-mile panorama of tents and log cabins, stretching up along the Yukon, and across the Klondike beyond Lousetown.

"That reminds me." Pete gazed long at the scene before them.

"What reminds you?" questioned Cassiar.

"I am thinkin' of takin' to myself a home."

Cassiar anxiously scanned Pete's face for signs of mental aberration. "Seems to me the Government is goin' to accomodate your hibernatin' notions, and give you a boardin' place—you havin' no choice about bay windows and the cookin'."

"I am thinkin' of fixin' up the cabin on the hill so it'll be warm for Winter. I ain't tillicums with the Government right now, so it come to me that I might get you to file a home-site on that bench."

Cassiar was perplexed. Pete and he had traveled long trails together, and this was the first indication he had ever observed in him, of anything but the most humorously sane mentality. Of course his judgment on sourdough bread and gold formations had always been a trifle flighty; but Pete's highgrading on the Reserve in broad daylight, and now this idea of making a home on the hill, looked too queer to be rational.

"What?" Cassiar expostulated. "You don't mean that you are aimin' to reside permanent, on that bald-headed mountain? But, if it's any value to you, I'll locate a town-site on Mount McKinley. I ain't arguin' the point none with you Pete, but I think your buildin' on that hill was plumb scandalous, when there's so much level land doin' nothin'."

"Of course," Cassiar continued as they trudged toward town, "if you would like to have me stop up on the hill and look after your outfit until—well—until you're through with the Government, it'd be all right. My claim on Hunker is prospectin' fair; there's a plenty to keep me busy for a spell and I could be stickin' around when you get out. I hope you ain't gone too durn long, but there ain't any tellin' what this lopsided Government might do."

AT THE trial the next morning, the gold commissioner requested Pete to indicate some one acceptable to himself, who would be a competent judge of mineral in the district. He was puzzled by the request and immediately selected his friend Leggett.

Pete was called to identify the poke of nuggets he had left as bail. A gold-pan containing a quantity of coarse gold and nuggets was then produced and the gold in the pan and that in Pete's poke were submitted to Leggett for comparison. After a close examination he pronounced the gold as identical in color, form and quality. Pete and his friends were informed that the gold in the pan was taken from the Reserve, near the spot where Pete had been apprehended.

Under his breath Cassiar in lurid adjectives cursed the Government to everlasting perdition. He scanned Pete's countenance and was more convinced than ever that his friend had gone queer.

"The durned old totem pole," he whispered to Leggett, "ain't carin' a fly-speck of a color if he gets sent up for ten years, and leaves everybody behind that cares a bean about him. I've seen a variety of fools; Pete's all of 'em. Why didn't he mush out before they hitched it onto him?"

Pete retired with Leggett to a side room to counsel on the situation. When they returned Leggett carried a sketch of the locality under consideration; and requested that the accused with Cassiar and himself be permitted to examine the spot from which the Government had taken the gold placed in evidence against Pete.

After noon, Pete with a member of the mounted police and a deputy from the commissioner's office left for Hunker Creek. Leggett with Cassiar were to follow the next morning.

When Cassiar and Leggett crossed to the east side of Hunker, the following forenoon, they found Pete and his guards at the foot of the hill. In the bottom of a hole they had dug was wash gravel shot through with yellow specks.

"Yes, sir"—Pete extended a gold-pan with a yellow streak of coarse gold and a few rough nuggets in the bottom rim—"them yellow-boys are near enough like these"—he exhibited a couple of beautiful pieces of quartz stuccoed gold—"to be first cousins."

He passed the gold-pan to the bewildered Cassiar.

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"Here's Cassiar." Pete smiled broadly at Leggett. "Right now he is lookin' as cheerful as a row of owls in daylight. Let's have his expert mineral views on this formation. This zone is growin' gold on top like hair. Do you reckon the mother-lode knows her little yellow-boys is up here gettin' all sunburned? Where do you figger they come from?"

Cassiar was too full of gloom to reply to Pete's jocularity. Gold might nature-fake and be where it was impossible to be; that didn't interest him. But Pete under arrest was not a pleasant sight. Silently he felt out a black pipe and proceeded to soothe his jangled nerves.

"Now, gents," Pete explained when they had climbed the hill to the cabin, "I got a burn on the moss and it's pannin' rich to mushrooms. While me and Leggett goes out in the back yard and gathers a couple of quarts of mushrooms to put in the mutton stew, Cassiar will construct some of his twenty carat sody biscuits. I take 'em for a tonic."

The biscuits were delectable when "sopped" in canned roast mutton and mushrooms.

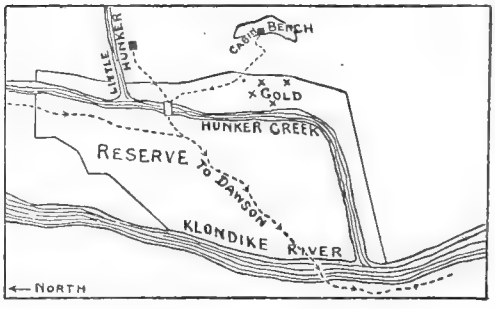
"Now, gents, from a mineral standpoint," Pete leaned his elbow on the table, helped himself to his sixth biscuit, and balanced it judicially—"takin' into consideration the dip and slant of stratas, and them cussed glaciers a-poundin' it all up"—Pete closed one eye at Cassiar's lonesome visage—"I am holdin' that there is a mite too much sody in 'em."

"Leggett thought I better record that residence location on this ground, like you spoke of," said Cassiar, imparting the information much as he would have pronounced a burial service over Pete.

After dinner, Pete unexpectedly unfolded the map he had sketched the day before and adressed the two officers:

"Now if you two gents and this mineral expert will look at this diagram, I will illuminate a few things on how to locate placer gold. The Almighty made it, but a man has got to invent ways of findin' it; that's what makes the game worth playin'."

On the sketch of the locality was the Klondike River to the west, with Hunker flowing through the Reserve to its juncture with the Klondike. Several crosses on the map along the foot of the hill, below the cabin, marked the spots where Pete had discovered rich pay on the Reserve. The sketch included the bench, with the cabin and the trail leading up from Hunker.



"Now where do you figger those shallow spots came from? They are twenty feet above bedrock, with nuggets at the moss roots. There ain't any indications of the Almighty puttin' sody in the ground to heave that gold up to the surface. Gold goes down, just like other things. So I says to myself, 'Gold is where you find it.' If gold goes down, it ain't a long gamble that it's to be up before it comes down. Seein' that that is plumb facts and not mineral conversation, I just began snoopin' around until I found where that gold come from.

"I got some samples cached in my yard that'll be a sight more convincin' than this off-hand photograph."

Pete led the party out on the narrow bench where shallow holes exposed rich pay gravel, and explained:

"There's part of the bed of an old stream on this bench; carryin' gold identical with the gold on the bottom. Them rich pockets down there on the Reserve are slides that slipped off the edge of this hill and pancaked out on the bottom."

After discovering the bench gold, Pete feared that the Government would not allow his filing if he offered it, and had been cleaning up the rich spots where the slides had broken away. Water being scarce on the bench, he had been compelled to pack dirt down the hill to clean it up in Hunker.

"Now if you will let me have a look at them writin's."

The official documents that Leggett handed him proved to be a location receipt,

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showing that Leggett had filed a claim on the bench the afternoon before, together with a deed of the bench filing, made out to Pete and Cassiar, equal owners of the bench claim.

As Leggett and the two officers started down the hill for Dawson, the last they heard of the two old Alaskans was Cassiar cussing Pete affectionately, with many reiterations of—

"You old totem-pole, you had to follow mineral indications, didn't you?"

And Pete retorting—

"You old sody biscuit artist, how many times I got to instruct you; 'Gold is where you find it.'"

SMALL and QUIET

by Martin D Schram

TWO men occupied a seat in a railway coach. They had little in common as regards outward appearance. The man next the aisle was bulky of form and careless as to dress. His face, at first glance, would have been considered homely and good-natured; but a closer examination would reveal a heavy-hanging jaw and eyes a little too small and red, giving, on the whole, the general impression of craftiness cloaked by careless good humor.

The man sitting next the window was small and neat of dress, these characteristics gaining emphasis through contrast with the other. His features were fine, almost delicate. His eyes and brow were a dark brown, in decided contrast to his skin, which was uncommonly white and smooth. About him was an air of quiet composure.

Despite the evident dissimilarity between the two men, there was one tie which bound them together, making them for the time being inseparable. This tie was a pair of steel handcuffs, one circlet of which embraced the right wrist of the larger man and the other as firmly attached to the left wrist of the other.

The large man glanced out of the window. A careless, jocular expression broke over his face. With a good-natured grin he turned to the little man.

"Well, here we are. Down the river again."

The other paused before he spoke.

"Yes," he said at length, "you're one of these fellows that never learn anything. I told you last time I took you down that we'd be making the same old trip over again if you didn't swear off when they let you go."

The big man smiled as a lion might smile at the counsel of a jack-rabbit.

"So you did, Carney. And we're here for sure. But you know me. There ain't no way to make a Sunday-school teacher out of a guy that goes around crackin' safes. It can't be done. Oh, well— Say, I wonder——"

A reminiscent expression came to the face of the unrepentant, care-free "Buck."

"How long is it, Carney, since they sent me down before? It must be——"

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"Going on to five years," replied Carney. "It'll be five years this Fall."

"Five years," repeated Buck musingly. "Gee, it don't seem that long. I wonder how many of the boys are still there. I told them I'd be droppin' in to see 'em again sometime. Let's see. There's Franey. He had eight years to serve yet when they give me the gate. And Chuck— I guess he's out for good behavior by now. And then there's the 'Old-Timer.' He's there yet. You know, Carney, I'd be almost glad to get back with the old bunch again if it wasn't for one thing."

"Work?" inquired Carney, disinterestedly.

"Naw. The work never bothered me none. Eats."

"What?"

"Eats. Grub. If there's one thing I like to do it's eat. Besides, I'm a big man and I got to have three good meals a day. But this stuff they feed you down here, it ain't fit to feed to hogs."

"Well, maybe it ain't," replied Carney a little heatedly, "but do you think you're going on any picnic down to this place? If you took my advice——"

Buck waved an impatient hand.

"Sure, I know. We been over all that before. But just the same I say they ain't got no right to make a guy work like they do and then not feed him right."

The little man made no reply. He was not disposed to argue, but lapsed into his usual reticence. He gazed out of the window at the speeding landscape for a few moments. Then, yawning, he took a newspaper from his pocket, settled a little more comfortably in his seat and left his prisoner to his thoughts.

The taking of a criminal to the State penitentiary was no new experience for Carney. He regarded it as a necessary evil attendant upon his job as detective. During the fifteen years of his work at headquarters he'd made the trip perhaps a hundred times. It was, almost without exception, a tiresome, uneventful journey. This was his third trip with Buck Hodges, expert safe-blower.

Carney scanned the paper without interest. One article was an account of the latest Government investigation; another announced the acquittal of a lady who had murdered her husband with an ice-pick; still another related the sufferings of a young divorcée compelled to struggle along on $25,000 a month alimony.

Carney dropped the paper to cover a yawn, letting the sheet lie in his lap while his eyes took in languidly the cool stretches of woods and green meadows through which they were passing. The sun coming through the window was warm. The cushion was soft. The click of the car wheels over the rails was soothing and restful to the nerves. Carney's thoughts wandered. Without being conscious of it, he closed his eyes. In a few moments his head nodded and he dozed off.

WITH a start he awoke and gazed around. For a short time he was unable to take in the situation. Then the sight of his surroundings, the sound of brakes being applied as they approached a station and the presence of Buck by his side brought him back with a jerk.

He flushed a little guiltily and was somewhat relieved to find Buck still beside him. But Buck would have to be there, of course. The handcuffs——

He glanced at Buck's face and mentally recoiled. Was it imagination or did he read there a new expression? The eyes seemed narrower. The general expression of good nature appeared to have changed to a look of determination.

Carney's fears were soon confirmed. As the train stopped Buck thrust his face close to Carney's ear. His voice was low but unmistakably resolute.

"Listen. I got your gun. We're gonna get off here. You come along quiet or I'll——"

The threat was not spoken but was expressed eloquently by the little red eyes and fierce expression of the man. Carney had just a moment to confirm Buck's statement that the gun had indeed changed possession and to decide his course of action. Previous experience with Buck had convinced the detective that his erstwhile prisoner would not hesitate at desperate moves in an emergency. It took but a moment for Carney to make his decision.

When the train had fully stopped he arose with the other and without a word followed him through the door of the coach, which was close by. A few curious eyes followed them as they made their exit, but no one moved to interfere.

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In an instant they were standing on the packed cinders and the train was pulling out. They were the only passengers to alight. The place was deserted save for the station agent who could be dimly discerned through the window of his little office in the station several rods off. His feet were propped high. Having cast one sleepy eye at the train as it had come and gone, he was once more lost in sleep. A mongrel pup was following his example on the porch of the weatherbeaten station.

Buck took in the situation quickly.

"Come on. This way," he ordered.

They turned away from the station toward a clump of bushes a short distance away. Not until they were concealed from chance observation did Buck speak, and then in short, matter-of-fact commands.

"Come on. Hand over the key to these bracelets and let's get 'em off."

The weapon which Buck had produced was held carelessly but significantly. The little detective said nothing nor did his face betray any sign of emotion as he reached in his pocket for the key. For a moment he clawed around in his pocket, a blank expression coming over his countenance. Buck moved impatiently.

"Come on. What's eatin' you?" he said.

Carney withdrew his hand—empty.

"It's gone," he said simply.

Buck looked at him steadily for an instant. Then his features were contorted into a terrible expression of anger. With an oath he transferred his gun from his free hand to the one attached to Carney's, awkwardly twisting both their arms in such manner that the detective was covered. Then the big man made such a search of the other's person as only a professional crook could make. This proving of no avail, he made the search again, Carney meekly and silently submitting.

When the second examination had been completed without the discovery of the key the two men stood there looking at each other—Buck, angry, suspicious, puzzled; Carney, unruffled, calmly awaiting the next development. Buck glared at the detective.

"You know where that key is?"

It was half a question, half a charge. The detective returned the piercing gaze of the larger man with a look equally steady.

"Can't say that I do. I might've left it back at headquarters, or it might've slipped out on the train or——"

Buck thrust his face with its little red eyes and clinched teeth next to Carney's and poked his gun in the little man's ribs.

"You're lyin'," he said fiercely. "You little runt, you try to trick me and I'll cook you. You tell me darn quick where that key is or I'll——"

The little man backed off a step but showed no sign of fear.

"I told you I lost it," he reaffirmed calmly.

Buck was still a moment. His little eyes darted quick glances at Carney as though trying to pierce his expressionless countenance and read the thoughts behind. At length he nodded his head as if having arrived at a decision. A trace of his good-humored smile flitted over his face.

"Carney," said he, "you're a darn poor detective and a worse liar, but you know how to keep your mouth shut. Come on. We're leaving this place."

II

BUCK HODGES, safe-blower, was a man who, through varied experiences, had learned to be content with fortune. When he met with success he took it calmly. Confronted with ill-luck, he wasted no thought in unavailing regrets and complainings. Even when, as a few hours before, his vision encompassed prison gates, he took the matter philosophically. Seated in the train under the surveillance of the detective and speeding toward a five-year period of imprisonment, he had been not only resigned but almost content with his fate.

On the other hand, Buck was also a man of preferences. While able to accept misfortune with cheerful unconcern he had a natural desire for success; and though uncomplaining when sentenced to the restricted life of a state penitentiary he had an easily understandable preference for liberty. In the present instance he was determined to make the most of a fortunate chance.

Here, however, was something unique in the experience even of such an old-timer as Buck: freedom with an encumbrance, like a fox with one paw in the trap.

Of course, he might shoot Carney. A man who believed in drastic measures to solve critical situations, Buck had little moral compunction with regard to that; but

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obviously that would not help matters. A live man bound to one's wrist is without doubt more easily managed than a dead one. The problem was clearly that of removing the cuffs, and that, if possible, without the help or knowledge of any one who might furnish a clue to his whereabouts when he had gained his freedom.

Buck pondered the matter as with long strides he led the way in a direction away from the little town clustered about the railroad station. They skirted the village, taking the greatest care to escape observation. Picking up the road again, they followed its direction, but kept to the trees and fields on its right so as to avoid any encounters.

For a long time they tramped in silence. The length of Buck's strides and the pace he was setting increased in proportion to the mental activity he brought to bear on his problem. The gait was at times so swift that Carney was forced to take two steps to his companion's one. Nevertheless, he tripped along, a little breathlessly, but without evidence of concern over the situation. Judging from the blithe manner in which he occasionally hummed snatches from a song it might be gathered that he was content to leave developments in the hands of his engrossed consort.

The country appeared to be sparsely settled, and the road, which they kept in sight through the trees, little traveled. Nothing claimed their attention or broke the silence into which they both had fallen save when occasionally the little man stumbled over a branch, bringing upon himself the profane abuse of his fretful partner.

Dusk had commenced to come on when, coming to a cleared space, they saw a farm. Some distance off stood the farmer's house immediately surrounded by trees. An oat field intervened between the house and them. On the farther side of the field and a very short distance from the farmer's dwelling stood a little whitewashed building such as might be used for the harboring of tools.

Buck's eyes lit up. With growled warning to Carney he led the way through the tall oats. Fast closing night and the protection of the grain aided them in their concealment. Having arrived at the edge of the field nearest the house they stopped to survey the place. By peering intently they could take in the details of the farmhouse. It was a low, unimposing structure, with sagging porch and curious gables.

As they looked, a man emerged from the house and walked to a pump just off the rear porch. A beautiful collie capered about him. The two who were watching waited until the man had reentered the house with his bucket before they emerged from their hiding place.

Stealthily they started to traverse the open space to the little outhouse just a few rods off. They had nearly reached it when they stopped short, alarmed by a violent outburst of barking set up by the dog, which came bounding at them. They tarried just long enough to glimpse the farmer as he came out of the door with gun in hand.

Running and scrambling they made the oat field just as the sound of a discharge of buckshot reached their ears. The last part of their hasty retreat was accomplished largely through the Herculean efforts of Buck, who was forced to drag the little detective along with him, the smaller man not having possessed sufficient speed for the emergency.

Distance at length assuring safety, they stopped for a moment to catch their breath. Carney improved the opportunity to nurse a gashed wrist and ruefully to rub parts of his body which had suffered in the experience. Buck, when he had regained his breath, took advantage of the stop to deliver a round volley of oaths directed chiefly at Carney and at the cause of their unceremonious retreat. Having been thus relieved, he once more took up the way, Carney following meekly at his side.

It might have been two hours or five that they tramped and stumbled through the woods in the dark without coming across any other habitation. Climbing, falling, colliding with trees and with each other, they kept on. At length, worn out and discouraged, Buck stopped and leaned weakly against a tree.

"Carney," he said, "you and me have gone just as far as we're goin' tonight. We're goin' to camp right down here until morning."

They gathered together some leaves and boughs, disposing themselves upon them as comfortably as possible. Carney slept soundly though not silently. It was apparent that care was far from his mind. Buck did not sleep. The gun was in his possession

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and he could not afford to take the chance of Carney's regaining it. So he stayed awake through the long hours of the night while the stars above winked to each other their amusement at his plight.

III

DURING that seemingly interminable vigil, interrupted only by an occasional sound set up by the mysterious denizens of the wood and by the peaceful snoring of the little man, Buck had ample opportunity to ponder his perplexing predicament. One thing was certain—if the handcuffs were to be removed and his excape effected no time could well be lost. By this time Carney's failure to appear at the penitentiary had been, no doubt, the cause for sending out a posse which might be scouring the country for them at the present moment. No half-way methods, Buck decided, could longer be afforded. One desperate move must be made if he was to gain his liberty.

At the first streak of dawn Buck awakened Carney by a none-too-gentle jerk of his manacled hand. The little detective rubbed his eyes sleepily and indulged in a one-armed stretch. His cheerful composure and reticent unconcern were beginning to get on the nerves of the overwrought Buck.

They looked around them. The increasing light of day disclosed the fact that they had spent the night in a little gully. After refreshing themselves with a drink from a little spring close by, the two men started off once more. Buck led the way up a moderately steep ascent tangled with shrubbery and underbrush.

Climbing, stumbling and interfering with each other, they had nearly reached the brow of the hill when there was a rustling in the brush ahead of them. Buck stopped, every nerve on end. He crouched, pulling Carney down with him. For long, breathless moments they held their cramped positions while the rustling continued.

Very suddenly there came into view—a hen, a white hen of spotless plumage and grave mien. The wandering fowl appeared to be entirely unconscious of observing eyes as it sauntered sedately past the crouching figures.

Buck's emotions underwent a rapid change. Apprehension gave way to surprise, which in turn yielded to desire. A dull gnawing feeling within him seemed suddenly to make itself known. Acute hunger, forgotten in the stress of excitement, now smote him. His ready imagination envisioned a plump fowl impaled on a stick, sizzling and sputtering over a fire. To think was, for him, to act.

Experience will prove that it is a comparatively difficult feat for one man to catch a chicken running wild in the woods. When attempted by two men securely bound together, it becomes well-nigh impossible. The hen in the present instance proved unusually fleet of foot. This was discovered by her two pursuers, who, after a chase in which they were outclassed from the very outset, came down with a crash, their feet having become entangled. The hen scrambled off, proclaiming with much cackling the extent of her outraged dignity.

Picking themselves up, the two men continued until they gained the hill-crest. From this point an excellent view was afforded of the outlying country for several miles around. Toward the northeast Buck saw that for which he had been looking. A settlement composed of a score or more of white houses moderately far apart nestled among green fields interspersed with wooded stretches. A road could be seen winding through the center of the section. They could follow its twists and bends as it stretched between the village and a point not more than half a mile from them. With eagerness Buck led the way in a direction which would take them to the road. They reached it after a short tramp and turned to follow it toward the town they had seen from the hill.

Once more they avoided the road itself, stumping along in the fields and woods on its right. For an hour they tramped passing only an occasional barn or abandoned farmhouse. Then they came to the first house of the village. Buck's manner immediately became more cautious. Carney maintained his attitude of bored indifference.

After they had skirted the small garden of the first house and proceeded a few rods, a sound suddenly came to them, a musical tinkle, coming, it seemed, from a distance. Buck stopped short, Carney obediently following suit. They listened with senses alert. The tinkle was repeated at very short intervals. Buck gave a short grunt of satisfaction and they started on again. As they went forward cautiously the sound

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became more plain until it could be identified as the metallic ring of hammer on anvil. In short time they were close to the rear of a little blacksmith shop from which proceeded the sound they had followed.

From the protection of a clump of willows they could take in the details of the place unobserved. It was a low, dirty building, sadly in need of paint and repair. An old piece of stovepipe stuck through an aperture in the shingled roof. They could see part of the front of the place which was a cleared space opening onto the road. This space was strewn with old horseshoes, rusty wagon rims and junk. A plow, evidently sent for repair, stood there. A little way off stood a spring wagon, its horses hitched to a post. The only opening in the back of the shop facing them was a little window without a sash. Through this drifted the sound of men's voices punctuated by the blows of the hammer on the anvil.

After carefully taking in these details, Buck turned to Carney. He seized the little man by the collar and thrust his evil-looking face forward.

"Now listen to me," he said. "We're gonna sneak up on this blacksmith shop from the back so's I can get a look in that window. You come along quiet and do everything I tell you to. Understand?"

"Seems plain enough," returned Carney, calmly looking into the wicked red eyes and flushed face held close to his.

They gazed at each other a moment in silence as if each was trying to read the other's thoughts. Then Buck released his grip on the detective's collar.

"Come on," he said shortly, "and remember what I told you."

Together they crept quickly but cautiously to the rear of the low building. They paused a moment to see if their movements had been observed. Assured that they were undiscovered, Buck raised his head very slowly to the little window and looked in, taking care to expose no more of his face than was necessary.

A FEW seconds passed before his eyes became accustomed to the dim light. Afterwards he could recall the details of the place—the figure of a man lounging on the farther side of the shop, a rig standing in one corner, tools of various kinds hung on hooks and nails against one wall, the junk scattered around, the bellows and the flaming forge casting grotesque shadows on the walls. These details he took in subconsciously; but one object struck him with such force that all else was banished from his mind. It was the figure of a man who stood directly before him—a man of such unbelievable proportions that Buck, who was by no means undersized, seemed to shrink by comparison.

He stood there, this giant, with his body stripped to the waist. His huge, hair-covered torso, illuminated by the crimson glow of the forge and standing in bold relief against the dark background, resembled that of a monster chimpanzee. The arm which swung the hammer and brought it down on the anvil with sounding blows was of the size of a wagon tongue with muscles flexing beautifully. The thick neck, heavily veined, bore erect a massive head. Long hair hung over the perspiring face.

Buck gazed for a time as if hypnotized. Finally he withdrew his face from the window. Mentally he went over the little scenario he had planned in which he and Carney entered the shop and with drawn gun ordered the blacksmith to remove their bonds. It had seemed a very simple plan.

But now the matter presented an entirely new aspect. The pistol which Buck fingered seemed an impotent thing. The figure of the man by the forge hulked in his mind. He could almost feel the heavy hammer descending on his head. He was no coward, but he could not resist the feeling of helplessness which came over him. With an effort, he resisted this lapse of will sufficiently to bring himself to consider the possibility of gaining his desire by strategy. He might frame some story, some plausible explanation of the situation and excuse for wanting the cuffs removed. He strove to invent some such story; but his weary brain refused to respond, and the feeling of helplessness returned.

The two men stood there for quite a time in silence while these things raced in a perplexing manner through Buck's mind. Finally he gave a sort of shrug of his clumsy body as if he were throwing off a great weight. He jerked his manacled hand as a signal to Carney and, turning their backs on the little blacksmith shop, they re-entered the protection of the trees.

If Carney wondered at the strange actions of the other he did not speak his thoughts nor ask questions. Buck vouchsafed

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no explanations. He kept a moody silence, only casting an occasional glance at the other. It was strange, but this little detective with his indifferent fearlessness and self-assurance was beginning to bother him. The idea struck him that the little detective, beneath his apparent unconcern, was clearly determined to win out in the end. The thought worried him.

In an aimless manner they wandered off, leaving the little village behind. When caution became no longer necessary, Buck slowed the pace. His manner became listless, and his feet dragged. The gnawing feeling within him was becoming unbearable. As he trudged wearily he yielded to the weakness of picturing in his mind a sumptuous repast. He even went so far as to imagine the details of his purely mental feast. He lingered long over his favorite dessert — strawberry shortcake — before bringing the meal to a close with a glass of champagne. Having completed the dinner, he found himself emptier than before and cursed himself for his weakness.

Their aimless course brought them once more to the top of a little hill, where they rested, weary from the climb. Before them lay a rolling expanse of yellow grain. A little way off several men could be seen working in the fields. A farmhouse stood on an elevation of ground a stone's throw off, the smoke curling cozily from its little red chimney. As the two men looked they saw the tiny figure of a woman coming out of the door of the house. Simultaneously a sound came to their ears—the sound of a cowbell which the woman appeared to be ringing. It was evidently a well-known signal. The men in the fields ceased their work and hastened in the direction of the house.

Buck stood there and watched. A conflict was raging within him. He glanced stealthily at Carney and moistened his lips to speak, but thought better of it. He finally ventured a question which he attempted to make guileless and indifferent.

"Feelin' a little hungry?"

If a flicker came into Carney's eyes for an instant it passed unnoticed.

"Nope. I ain't a big eater."

Buck pondered this a moment, stealing another glance at the detective's immobile face. He shifted his ground slightly.

"These country people sure do know how to dish out the grub," he ventured. "Looks like they got some chickens up there near the house. Nice vegetable garden there, too. Wouldn't wonder if they had some cows over there where them trees are."

"Wouldn't wonder," agreed Carney without interest.

Once more Buck was silent and again he tried to see behind the stoic calm of the little man's face without success. He decided it was time to speak his thoughts, and attempted to bluster his way through.

"Look here," he said, attempting to speak in the same commanding tone he had employed on previous occasions, "we're gonna go up to this house and get something to eat. I'm goin' to tell 'em a story and if you know what's good for you, you ain't goin' to open your mouth."

"No, we ain't," replied Carney, quietly.

"Why you—you little runt— What do you mean? I——"

"No you won't," cut in the little man with sudden heat. "Now you listen to me. I've been letting you run this party, but right here is where I'm going to step in. You know darn well you ain't going to use that gun on me and if you want to start any rough stuff, come on! But the only way you're going to get anything to eat at that house is to turn over the gun to me!"

Carney seemed to have grown a foot while making that speech. His face had a tensity and his words such a ring that Buck stared in dumb surprize. The suddenness of the man's change of manner and his bold audacity held him spellbound. When he was able to think, Buck tried to convince himself that this was only a bluff. Why, the little fellow had been as meek as a lamb up to that moment. But there was a look in Carney's eye, a firmness in his tone, and an adamant something in his poise that argued the man's sincerity.

Buck meditated long moments in silence. Once more the struggle between appetite and freedom was on. Slowly his longing to be free began to shrink as his passion for food increased in his desire. Buck fought it out in silence.

For a long while they stood there. At length a slow, good-natured smile came over Buck's face, such a smile as he had worn back in the railway coach. He reached in his hip pocket and took out the gun. Looking at it an instant he handed it over, hilt first. Carney, who had not relaxed a muscle, received it without a word and put it in his pocket.

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Buck heaved a sigh more expressive of relief than of regret. Then an eager look came into his eyes.

"Come on, now," he said, "and let's see what this farmer has on his bill of fare."

IV

BUCK tipped back in his chair with a feeling of deep content. For a man who faced five years in a state penitentiary he was in an unusually happy frame of mind. He turned to look at Carney beside him.

"Well, strike me green!" he exclaimed. "Say, didn't I hear you say something a while back about not being much of an eater?"

Carney waited until he had downed his second piece of mince pie before answering.

"I don't do so bad when I'm hungry," he admitted.

"Nope. Reckon you don't."

Buck eyed the little detective humorously and then thoughtfully.

"Don't make no difference now," said Buck, after the pause, "but just out of curiosity I'd like to know what you did with the key to these things." Buck glanced at the handcuffs.

"They were in my pocket on the train," replied Carney. "I got a kind of habit of fingering my keys in my pocket and I guess I had my hand on them when I fell asleep."

"Guess you did," agreed Buck. "I got your gun without any trouble and I went through all your pockets I could. But what did you do with 'em?"

"Left them on the seat when we got up to go out." Carney's eyes twinkled humorously. "We won't need them, though. There's a guy I know of where we're going that knows how to take these things off."

THE OUTDOOR SONG

by **Mary Carolyn Davies**

THERE'S a little song that sings along the cañons and the ridges,
Where the world is gashed and broken and has crumbled round the edges.
It's a strange and eery song to hear, but when you once have known it,
You can't forget its singing, however you disown it.

It's the song of the great outdoors. Come out where the rocks rear up to God,
And you know there's danger and fear about, and death in the sky and sod.
But you pack your kit, and your camp-fire's lit where the coyotes howl and creep,
And the song comes down and stands at your side, and it sings you off to sleep.

There's an eery song that calls to you, and clings to you and taunts you,
And you know that God is out beyond the hills somewhere, and wants you.
And you leave the fire of hearth and home for camp-smoke dim and graying,
For when the wild song calls you there's no choice but your obeying.

It's the song of the great outdoors—"Come out where your hand can touch the sky!
Let ambition and hate and doubt and black despair go by."
And then you'll know there's a God below, as well as above in the blue.
"There are stars about! Come out!" The wild song calls to you.

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HENRY PLUMMER—BAD-MAN

by E. A. Brininstool

THE "Napoleon of Western outlaws" was the grim title attached to Henry Plummer, Montana's notorious bad-man of the early '60s. At the time of his "stretching hemp" at the hands of the Vigilantes it was acknowledged by "Red" Yager—on the scaffold—that Plummer was the chief of a gang of cutthroats, murderers and road-agents consisting of one hundred and thirty men, and that the band had murdered one hundred and two men.

Henry Plummer was a native of Connecticut. He left the East and arrived at Lewiston, Idaho, in the Spring of 1861. At that time Idaho embraced a vast region of territory, which also included what is now the present State of Montana. He had, prior to his appearance at Lewiston, been marshal of Nevada City, where, after being twice imprisoned for murder, he fled to Oregon and thence to Lewiston.

Plummer was a born leader of men. He was of handsome and gentlemanly appearance, refined and of good education, but he had a fishy eye and a low brow. Before he had been in Lewiston twenty-four hours his fame as a gambler had spread. In this pursuit he met many congenial spirits, and soon after, at his instigation, the "Plummer Gang" was formed. Every tough, thug, cutthroat, bandit and murderer in that section was induced in one way or another to join the band. Indeed, Plummer would accept no man who had not committed at least one murder.

So strong was Plummer's influence and so smooth and oily was his eloquence that he eventually succeeded in getting himself elected sheriff of Beaver County. He was so "slick" indeed that men who a few weeks before were denouncing him were completely deceived by an apparent sudden change of heart—

But robberies and murders continued unabated. Plummer himself was an acknowledged "dead shot." He killed Jack Cleveland, his old friend; was tried and acquitted on the ground that "his language was irritating to me!" Everywhere hold-ups, killings and robberies continued, and at last the decent element rose up.

In his official capacity Plummer had appointed as deputies a number of his worst gangsters. One of these was George Ives. A young man named Nicholas Tbalt was found murdered, and George Ives was suspected. He was arrested and confessed. Red Yager also was implicated, and it was determined that they must die. Yager gave the Vigilantes a list of the outlaw band, stating that Sheriff Plummer was the captain and leader.

Plummer was then making his headquarters at Bannack. A committee from the Vigilantes waited upon him and surprized him with his gun tucked away in his coat pocket. When told the object of the Vigilantes, all Plummer's bravado deserted him. He begged, pleaded and used every argument that he could devise to induce the Vigilantes to spare his life, but they were obdurate. He was told that he was to die. The cringing murderer begged them to cut off his arms and legs; cut out his tongue; do anything, only spare his life.

He then demanded a jury trial; pleaded to see his sister-in-law, to all of which a deaf ear was turned. At last Plummer fell on his knees and with tears and lamentations declared he was too wicked to die. He confessed numerous murders and seemed on the verge of instant collapse. The Vigilantes marched him to a scaffold which Plummer himself had built.

As the outlaw chief was led up to the rope, he slipped off his necktie and tossed it to a young man in the crowd as a souvenir. He was hoisted as high as several men could lift him, then dropped. He died instantly.

Every member of the gang implicated by Yager was run down, tried and executed by the Vigilantes.

Henry Plummer was but twenty-seven years of age at the time of his execution, but it is safe to assume that he was the most dangerous bad-man, because of his dual nature, that the old West ever produced.

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CAPTAIN BLOOD'S DILEMMA

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Rafael Sabatini

Author of "Maracaybo," "The Hostage," etc.

FIVE miles out at sea from Port Royal, whence the details of the coast of Jamaica were losing their sharpness, the *Colleen* hove to, and the sloop she had been towing was hauled alongside.

To the head of the ladder in the ship's waist Captain Blood escorted his compulsory guest, Colonel Bishop, the deputy-governor, whom he had constrained aboard as a hostage for his own safe passage out of Port Royal. The colonel, a great, fleshy man, who for three hours and more had been in a state of mortal panic, breathed freely at last, and as the tide of his fears receded, so that of his hatred of this audacious buccaneer resumed its normal flow.

But he was circumspect. He kept to himself the passionate vow that, once in Port Royal, there was no effort he would spare, no nerve he would not strain, to bring Peter Blood to final moorings in Execution Dock.

Captain Blood had no illusions. But he was not, and never would be, the complete pirate. Not another buccaneer in the Caribbean would have denied himself the satisfaction of stringing Colonel Bishop from the yard-arm. But Blood was not of these. He was wanting in ruthlessness, and he abhorred bloodshed and avoidable violence in all its forms. Had that not been enough to restrain him, here was more.

Arabella Bishop was the deputy governor's niece, and though Arabella Bishop might despise Blood for a pirate rogue, though he might definitely have relinquished all hope of ever winning her for his own, yet she abode in his soul as a bitter-sweet, purifying, almost sanctifying influence. The love that is never to be realized will often remain a man's guiding ideal. Because of her, if for no other reason, Bishop's life, whatever its menace to his own, must remain sacred to him.

And so he smiled into the bloated, sallow face and the little, malevolent eyes that fixed him with a hatred not to be dissembled.

"A safe journey home to ye, colonel darling," said he in valediction. "It's the second time ye've served me for a hostage. I'm lucky to ye, colonel, as ye should be perceiving. If ye'll be advised, ye'll avoid me in future."

Jerry Pitt, the master of the *Colleen*, was at the captain's elbow; and mild though the nature of this fair-haired Devonshire lad, his blue eyes looked darkly upon the departure of the deputy-governor of Jamaica. Behind them a little mob of buccaneers, grim, stalwart, sun-tanned, fierce-eyed devils, were restrained from cracking Bishop like a flea only by their submission to the dominant will of their captain.

The colonel's instincts warned him that

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his life was held precariously. Therefore he said nothing, but fled blundering and tumbling down that ladder to the sloop and to his waiting negro crew.

They pushed the frail craft off from the great, red-hulled ship, hoisted sail, put out their sweeps, and headed back for Port Royal. And Bishop, the great hulk of him huddled in the stern sheets, sat silent, dark brows knitted, coarse lips pursed, malevolence and vindictiveness so whelming his late panic, that he forgot his near escape of the yard-arm and the running noose.

On the mole at Port Royal, under the low embattled wall of the fort with its single tower, Major Mallard, the commandant, and Lord Julian Wade, waited to receive him.

Lord Julian was a kinsman and envoy of that crafty, intriguing statesman, Sunderland. He had lately reached the West Indies on a mission which had for its object at all costs to put an end to buccaneering, and in particular to terminate the career of Captain Blood, whose exploits on the Main were a source of perpetual trouble between Spain and England. Sunderland had empowered his kinsman, at need and failing all other means, to seduce Blood away from his outlawry by a commission in the king's service.

Circumstances favoring the design, Lord Julian had all but succeeded, and his success might have been complete but for the unquenchable rancor of Colonel Bishop, who sought to trip and trap and persecute Captain Blood to his doom. Because of this, and because, too, the one thing that Blood had hoped to find, redemption in the eyes of Miss Arabella Bishop, was denied him, the captain had torn up the commission, and set sail once more for Tortuga, where his ships and his men—still ignorant of his momentary defection—should be awaiting him.

AS COLONEL BISHOP stepped ashore, Major Mallard was disposed to be apologetic.

"It was by the orders of Lord Julian, sir, that I allowed Blood's ship to go. I would have sunk her here in the harbor, and that in spite of your excellency's being aboard, but for your orders by Lord Julian that I should let her pass, and his lordship's assurance that he had Blood's word that no harm should come to you so that no harm came to him. I'll confess that I thought it rash in his lordship to accept the word of that —— pirate——"

"I have found it as good as another's," said Lord Julian coldly, cropping the major's too eager eloquence. He was far from being in the best of tempers. Having written home to the secretary of state that his mission had succeeded, he was now faced with the necessity of writing again to confess that his success had been ephemeral. And because Major Mallard's mustachios seemed lifted by a sneer at the notion of a buccaneer's word being acceptable, he added still more curtly: "My justification is here in the person of Colonel Bishop, returned safe and sound. As against that, sir, your opinion does not weigh for much."

"Oh, as your lordship says," Major Mallard's manner was tinged with irony. "To be sure, here's the colonel safe and sound. And out there is that pestilent Blood also safe and sound, to continue his piratical ravages."

"Ah, but not for long. No, by ——." Thus the colonel at last delivered himself, with the emphasis of an unprintable oath. "If I spend every shilling of my fortune and every ship of the Jamaica fleet, I'll have that foul knave in a hempen neck-tie before I've done. And I'll not be long about it." He took Lord Julian by the arm. "Come, my lord. We must take order about this."

They skirted the redoubt and passed through the great gates in the wall that enclosed together with the fort the spacious, fragrant garden and the white house that was the deputy-governor's residence, where Arabella waited anxiously. The sight of her uncle brought her relief.

"You took a great risk, sir," she told Lord Julian, half reprovingly.

But Lord Julian answered her as he had answered Mallard.

"There was no risk, ma'am. So that Blood's ship were allowed to pass the fort, no harm should come to Colonel Bishop. He pledged me his word to that."

She looked at him, and a more vivid color tinged her face. At the moment, however, the subject was not pursued. The deputy-governor's mood did not permit it. At supper and for long thereafter he talked of nothing but laying Blood by the heels, fuming and cursing almost at every mention of the buccaneer's name.

But next morning, very early, before the

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heat of the day came to render the open intolerable to his lordship, Lord Julian came upon Miss Bishop in the garden. He espied her from his window, and hurried forth to join her on one of the garden terraces, where a pergola of orange-trees provided a shaded, sauntering-space that was at once cool and fragrant.

He had for her what amounted to a message from Captain Blood. He had delayed its delivery, and it may be doubted if he would have delivered it at all, but for the profit to himself that he hoped to make.

He gave her good-morrow, and announced that he had to talk to her of Captain Blood.

" 'Twill be a change of subject," said she ironically, alluding to her uncle's last night's rantings. But keener eyes than his lordship's might have observed in her countenance a sign that this half sneer was but a feminine pretense.

She was of fair height, slim as a boy, with a boyish note in her voice, and a boyish, easy grace of movement. The ringlets of her dark brown hair clustered about a neck that was singularly white for one who had spent most of her short life within the tropic of Cancer. A scarlet rose, fresh-gathered, was pinned at her breast, like a splash of blood against the shimmering gray of her silken gown.

His lordship, very fine in blue taffetas, and with no more foppishness than may be condoned in a young man of quality, considered her and found her very good.

"He desired me to give you a message—a message that should prove to you that there is still something left in him of the unfortunate gentleman that—that—for which you once knew him."

"He thinks me credulous," said she, and my Lord marveled at her indifference, lacking the wit to find it suspicious. "What, pray, was the message?"

He did not immediately answer. He found that he had not sufficiently considered the terms he should employ, and the matter, after all, was delicate. They paced on in silence towards the brilliant sunshine where the pergola was interrupted by the passage upwards to the house. Across this patch of light fluttered a gorgeous butterfly that was like black and scarlet velvet, and large as a man's hand. His lordship's brooding eyes followed it out of sight before he answered.

"It is not easy. Stab me, it is not. He was a man who deserved well, and amongst us we have marred his chances; your father because he could not forget his rancor; you because—because, having urged him to take the king's commission as a means of redeeming what was past, you would not afterwards admit to him that he was so redeemed."

SHE had turned her shoulder to him, so that he could not see her face. "And you?" she asked him quietly. "What part has your lordship had in this—that you should incriminate yourself with us?"

"My part?" Again he hesitated; then plunged recklessly on, as men do when determined to perform a thing they fear. "If I understood him aright—if he understood aright, himself, my part was entirely passive, but none the less effective. I implore you to observe that I but report his words. I say nothing for myself. He thought, then—so he told me—that my presence here had contributed to his inability to redeem himself in your eyes, and unless he were so redeemed then redemption was nothing."

She faced him fully, a frown of perplexity bringing her brows together above her troubled eyes.

"He thought that you had contributed?" she echoed. It was clear she asked for enlightenment. He plunged on, to afford it her, his glance a little scared, his cheeks flushing.

"Aye, and he said so in terms which told me something that I hope above all things, and yet dare not believe, for God knows I am no coxcomb, Arabella. He said— But first let me tell you how I was placed. I had gone aboard his ship to demand the instant surrender of your uncle, whom he held captive. He laughed at me. Colonel Bishop should be a hostage for his safety.

"By rashly venturing aboard his ship I afforded him in my own person yet another hostage as valuable at least as Colonel Bishop. Yet he bade me depart, not from the fear of consequences, for he is above fear, nor from any personal esteem for me, whom he confessed he had come to find detestable, and this for the very reason that made him concerned for my safety——"

"I do not understand," she said, as he paused. "Is that not a contradiction in itself?"

"It seems so only. He saw in me one who made it impossible that he should win you

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so he said. Therefore he could with isfaction have killed me. But because y death might cause you pain, because ur happiness was the thing that above all ings he desired, he surrendered that part his guarantee of safety which my person orded him.

"If his departure should be hindered, and should lose my life in what might follow, ere was the risk that you might mourn Because of that he bade me leave his , and had me put ashore."

She looked at him with eyes that were im with tears. He took a step toward , a catch in his breath, his hand held out.

"Was he right, Arabella? My life's happiness hangs upon your answer."

But she continued silently to regard him with those tear-laden eyes, and a doubt, a tormenting doubt, beset him. When presently she spoke, he saw how true had been the instinct of which that doubt was born, for her words revealed the fact that of all he had said the only thing that had touched her consciousness and absorbed it from all other considerations, was Blood's conduct as it regarded herself.

"He said that!" she cried. "He did that! and for me! Oh!" She turned away, and through the slender, clustering trunks of the bordering orange-trees she looked out across the glittering waters of the great harbor to the distant hills. Thus for a little while, my lord standing stiffly, fearfully, waiting for fuller revelation of her mind. At last she spoke, slowly, deliberately, in a voice that at moments was half suffocated:

"Last night when my uncle displayed his rancor and his evil rage, it began to be borne in upon me that such vindictiveness can belong only to those who have wronged. It is the frenzy into which men whip themselves to justify an evil passion. I began then to suspect that I had been too credulous; that all the unspeakable things he had attributed to Peter Blood in these last years possibly were not true.

"Now I am sure of it—just as I am sure that I have added to the wrongs that weigh down that unfortunate gentleman. To a scoundrel such as he was described to me, and such as I too readily believed him, the act of which you have just told me would have been impossible."

"I agree," said his lordship, gently.

"You must. But though you disagreed, that would now weigh for naught. What weighs—oh, so bitterly—is the thought that but for the words in which yesterday I repelled him, he might have been saved. And now he is lost—back at his outlawry and piracy, and my uncle vowing to take and destroy him."

"The only agents were your uncle's hostility and his own obstinacy, which would not study compromise. You must not blame yourself for anything."

She swung to him with some impatience.

"You can say that, having reported to me his words, which in themselves prove how much I was to blame. It was my scorn of him; it was the epithets I cast at him that drove him. So much he has told you. Once I esteemed him very highly. That was in the old days in Barbados, when he was transported there a slave, a rebel convict, for his part in the Monmouth rising. Because of that very esteem, I came to abhor him for his subsequent unworthiness. But I begin to understand what drove him then, just as I take shame and sorrow in the part I have had in driving him to that desperate course again."

"You have no cause for that," said he. "But if it will afford you solace, you may still count on me to do what man can to rescue him from this position."

"You will do that?" she cried, with sudden, eager hopefulness. "You promise?" She held out her hand to him impulsively. He took it in both his own.

"I PROMISE," he answered her. And then, retaining still the hand she had surrendered to him—"Arabella," he said, very gently, "there is still this other matter upon which you have not answered me."

"This other matter?"

"This matter that concerns myself, and all my future, oh! so very closely. This thing that Blood believed, that prompted him—that—that—you are not indifferent to me."

He saw the fair face color and grow troubled once more.

"Indifferent to you?" said she. "Why, no. We have been good friends; we shall continue so, I hope, my lord."

"Friends! Good friends?" He was between dismay and bitterness. "It is not your friendship only that I ask, Arabella. You heard what I said, what I reported. You will not say that Peter Blood was wrong?"

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Gently she sought to disengage her hand, the trouble in her face increasing. A moment he resisted; then realizing what he did he set her free.

"Arabella!" he cried, on a note of sudden pain.

"I have friendship for you, my lord. But only friendship."

His castle of hope came clattering down about him, leaving him a little stunned. As he had said, he was no coxcomb. Yet here was something that he did not understand. She confessed to friendship, and it was in his power to offer her a great position, one to which she, a colonial planter's daughter, however, could never have aspired even in her dreams. This she rejected, yet spoke of friendship.

Peter Blood had been mistaken, then. How far had he been mistaken? Had he been as mistaken in her feelings toward himself as he obviously was in her feelings towards his lordship? In that case— His reflections broke off short. To speculate was to wound himself in vain. He must know. And so he asked her frankly—

"Is it Peter Blood?" But with his frankness there was mixed a certain grimness.

"I do not know," she answered him, faltering, which was hardly true. For, as if an obscuring veil had suddenly been rent that morning, she was permitted at last to see Peter Blood as he really was, and in his true relations to other men, and that sight, vouchsafed her some twenty-four hours too late, filled her with pity and regret and yearning.

Lord Julian knew enough of women to be left in no doubt of the true meaning of that answer. He bowed his head that she might not see the anger in his eyes, for as a man of honor he took shame in that anger which as a human being he could not repress. And because nature in him was stronger—as it is in most of us—than training, Lord Julian from that moment began to practise something that was akin to villainy.

The lingering regard in which he had held Peter Blood was choked by the desire to supplant and destroy a rival. He had passed his word to Arabella that he would use his powerful influence on Blood's behalf. But he forgot his pledge, and secretly set himself instead to aid and abet Arabella's uncle in the plans he laid for the trapping and undoing of that buccaneer.

When the Jamaica fleet put to sea some few days later, Lord Julian sailed wi Colonel Bishop in Vice-Admiral Craufurd flag-ship. Not only was there no need f either of them to go, but the deputy-go ernor's duties should have kept him ashor while Lord Julian was a useless man aboar a ship. Yet both went in obedience to th urgings of personal vengeance, and tha common emotion became a link betwee them, binding them in a sort of friendshi that must otherwise have been impossibl between men so dissimilar in breeding and i aspirations.

The hunt was up. They cruised awhil off Hispaniola, watching the Windward Pas sage, and suffering the discomforts of th rainy season which had now set in. Bu they cruised in vain, and after a month o it, returned to Port Royal there to fin awaiting them the most disquieting new from the Old World.

The megalomania of Louis XIV had set i in a blaze of war. The French legionarie were ravaging the Rhine provinces, an Spain had joined the nations leagued t defend themselves from the wild ambition of France. And there was worse than this There were rumors of civil war in England weary of the bigoted tyranny of King James It was reported that William of Orange ha been invited to come over.

Weeks passed, and every ship from hom brought additional news. William had crossed to England, and in March of that year, 1689, they learned that he had accepted the crown, and that James had thrown himself into the arms of France fo rehabilitation. To a kinsman of Sunderland's this was disquieting news indeed.

It was followed by letters informing Colonel Bishop that there was war with France, and that in view of its effect upon the colonies, a new governor-general was coming out to the West Indies in the person of Lord Willoughby, and that with him came a squadron under the command of Admiral van der Kuylen to reenforce the Jamaica fleet against eventualities.

Bishop realized that this must mean the end of his supreme authority, even though he should continue in Port Royal as deputy-governor. Lord Julian, in the lack of direct news to himself, did not know what it might mean to him. But he had been very close and confident with Colonel Bishop regarding his hopes of Arabella, and Colonel Bishop, more than ever, now that political events

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put him in danger of being retired, was anxious to enjoy the advantage of having a man of Lord Julian's eminence for his relative.

"The girl is in love with that rascal Blood," said his lordship dolefully. "That —blister me!—is the hideous truth. And as long as Blood lives, she will hope."

"Then with Blood dead perhaps she'll come to her silly senses," said her uncle. "Now is our opportunity. This war with France removes all restrictions in the matter of Tortuga. We are free to invest it in the service of the crown."

"Ah!" said Lord Julian, and pulled thoughtfully at his lip.

"I see that you understand." Bishop laughed coarsely. "I'll hunt this rascal in his lair, right under the beard of the king of France, and we'll take him this time if we reduce Tortuga to a heap of ashes."

On that expedition they sailed two days later, taking every ship of the fleet and several other vessels as auxiliaries. To Arabella and the world in general it was given out that they were going to raid French Hispaniola.

More than ever now should Colonel Bishop's sense of duty have kept him in Port Royal. But his hatred smothered duty, and made him reckless. In the great cabin of Vice-Admiral Craufurd's flagship, the *Imperator*, the deputy-governor got drunk that night to celebrate his conviction that the sands of Captain Blood's career were running out.

II

MEANWHILE, Captain Blood, carrying torment in his bosom, had blown into the fortified harbor of Tortuga, that stronghold of the buccaneers, ahead of the gales; and, sheltered there, he brooded in sullenness upon the past without plans or hopes for the future. He was drinking hard in those days, and for a season was in danger—out of his hopelessness and sense of utter damnation—of sinking to the brutish level of others of his kind before him.

He had been welcomed gladly, and without resentment, for what was past, by the buccaneers assembled in the island. Wolverstone had explained away his defection as no more than a ruse to enable him to turn round in a tight corner, and since here he was returned among them, Wolverstone's explanation was universally accepted.

He found then some six hundred men and four ships at his command. They were practically all Englishmen of his following. The French contingent had taken one of the ships and gone a-cruising on its own. Blood's officers, promptly returning to their allegiance, sought him with proposals of remunerative raids upon various Spanish settlements. But to all he showed an indifference which, as weeks passed and the rains came to an end, begot first impatience and then exasperation.

The truth was that, although he had come back to Tortuga and the Brethren of the Main, he could not shut out of his memory the epithets of "thief and pirate" that Arabella had cast at him. He found himself held fast in the bondage of that scorn. Therefore his despair but grew the deeper.

He was degenerating before the eyes of all. He had lost the almost foppish concern for his appearance, and was grown careless and slovenly in his dress. He allowed a black beard to grow on the cheeks that had ever been so carefully shaven, and the long, thick black hair, once so carefully curled, hung now a lank, untidy mane, about a face that was changing from its vigorous swarthiness to an unhealthy gray, while the blue eyes that once had been so vivid and compelling were now dull and lack-luster. Wolverstone, the only one who held the clue to this degeneration, ventured once—and once only—to beard him frankly with it.

"What a plague ails thee, Peter?" the giant had growled. "Lord, man, will you spend your days moping and swilling because a white-faced ninny in Port Royal 'll have none o' ye? 'Sblood and 'Ounds! If ye wants the wench, why the plague doesn't ye go and fetch her?"

The blue eyes glared at him from under the jet-black eyebrows with something of their old fire. But Wolverstone went on heedlessly.

"I'll be nice wi' a wench as long as niceness be the key to her favor. But, sink me now if I'd rot myself in rum on account of anything that daggles a petticoat. If there's no other expedition that'll tempt you, why not Port Royal? What a plague do it matter if it is an English settlement? It's commanded by Colonel Bishop, and there's no lack of rascals in your company'd follow you to —— if it meant getting Colonel Bishop by the throat.

"It could be done, I tell you. We've but

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to spy the chance when the Jamaica fleet is away. There's enough plunder in the town to tempt the lads, and there's the wench for you. Shall I sound them on't?"

Blood was on his feet, his eyes blazing, his livid face distorted.

"Ye'll leave my cabin this minute, so ye will, or by Heaven it's your corpse'll be carried out of it. Ye mangy hound, d'ye dare come to me with such proposals?" He fell to cursing his faithful officer with a virulence the like of which he had never yet been known to use. And Wolverstone in terror went out without another word. The subject was not raised again. Captain Blood was left to his idle abstraction.

And then one day there came aboard the *Colleen*, M. de La Place, the governor of Tortuga, accompanied by a chubby little gentleman, amiable of countenance, amiable and self-sufficient of manner.

"My captain," M. de La Place delivered himself, "I bring you M. de Cussy, the governor of French Hispaniola, who desires a word with you."

Captain Blood pulled the pipe from his mouth, shook, as it were, some of the rum out of his wits, rose and made a leg to M. de Cussy.

"*Serviteur!*" said he.

M. de Cussy returned the bow, and accepted a seat on the locker under the stern windows.

"You have a good force here under your command, my captain," said he.

"Some six hundred men."

"And I understand that they grow restive in idleness."

"They may go to the devil when they please."

M. de Cussy took snuff delicately.

"I have something better than that to propose," said he.

"Propose it then," said Blood, without interest.

M. DE CUSSY did not find Captain Blood encouraging. Nevertheless he went on.

"News has reached us from France that there is war with Spain."

"Is that news?" wondered Blood.

"I am speaking officially, my captain. I am not alluding to unofficial colonial skirmishes, and unofficial predatory measures which we have condoned out here. There is war — formally war — between France and Spain in Europe. It is the intention of France that this war be carried into the New World. A fleet is coming out from Brest under the command of M. le Baron de Rivarol for that purpose.

I have letters from him desiring me to equip a supplementary squadron and raise a force of not less than a thousand men to reenforce him on his arrival. What I have come to propose to you, my captain, is, in brief, that you enroll your ships and your force under M. de Rivarol's flag."

Blood looked at him with a faint kindling of interest.

"You are offering to take us into the French service?" he asked. "On what terms, monsieur?"

"With the rank of *capitaine de vaisseau* for yourself, and suitable ranks for the officers serving with you. You will enjoy the pay of that rank, and you will be entitled together with your men to one-tenth share in all prizes captured."

"Devilishly generous!" sniffed Blood. "We can sail out of here tomorrow, disembowel a Spanish settlement, and keep the whole of the plunder."

"Ah, yes, but with the risks attaching to acts of piracy. With us your position will be regular and official, and considering the powerful fleet by which M. de Rivarol is backed the enterprises to be undertaken will be on a much vaster scale than anything you could attempt on your own account. So that the one-tenth in this case may be equal to more than the whole in the other."

"I will consult my officers," said Captain Blood, and he sent for them.

They came, and the matter was laid before them by M. de Cussy himself. The proposal was opportune. The men were dissatisfied with their leader's inaction, and would no doubt be ready to accept the service of M. de Cussy offered on behalf of France, but the share was too small. For one-fifth of the prizes, the officers would answer for their men; not for less.

M. de Cussy was distressed. He had his instructions. It was taking a deal upon himself to exceed them. The buccaneers were firm. Unless M. de Cussy could make it one-fifth there was no more to be said. M. de Cussy finally consenting, the articles were drawn up and signed. The buccaneers were to be at Petit Goave by the end of January, when M. de Rivarol had announced that he might be expected.

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After that followed days of activity in Tortuga, refitting the ships, boucanning meat, laying in stores. Captain Blood meanwhile remained listless and aloof. If he had given his consent to the undertaking, or, rather, allowed himself to be swept into it by the wishes of his officers, it was only because the service offered was of a regular and honorable kind, nowise connected with piracy, with which he swore in his heart that he had done forever.

But his consent remained passive. The service entered awoke no zeal in him. He was perfectly indifferent—as he told Hagthorpe, who ventured once to offer remonstrance—whether they went to Petit Goave or to ——, and whether they entered the service of Louis XIV or of Satan.

Still in this mood he sailed from Tortuga, and still in this mood came to his moorings in the bay of Petit Goave. In this mood he greeted M. le Baron de Rivarol when that nobleman with his fleet of five men-of-war at last dropped anchor alongside the buccaneer ships in the middle of February. He had been six weeks on the voyage, he announced, and delayed by unfavorable weather.

Summoned to wait on him, Captain Blood repaired to the castle of Petit Goave, where the interview was to take place. The baron, a tall, hawk-faced man of forty, cold and distant of manner, measured Captain Blood with an eye of obvious disapproval. Of Hagthorpe, Christian and Wolverstone, who stood ranged behind their captain, he took no heed whatever.

His manner implied plainly that he despised them, and that he desired them at once to understand it. It had a curious effect upon Captain Blood. It awoke the devil in him, and it awoke at the same time his self-respect, which of late had been slumbering.

A sudden shame of his disordered, ill-kempt appearance made him perhaps the more defiant. There was almost a significance in the way he hitched his sword-belt round, so that the wrought hilt of his serviceable rapier was brought into fuller view. He waved his captains to the chairs that stood about.

"Draw up to the table, lads. Ye're keeping the baron waiting."

HAUGHTIER grew the stare of M. de Rivarol. To sit at table with these bandits placed him upon what he accounted a dishonoring equality with them. It had been his notion that—with the possible exception of Captain Blood—they should take his instructions standing, as became men of their quality in the presence of a man of his. He did the only thing remaining to mark a distinction between him and them. He put on his hat.

"Ye're very wise now," said Blood, amiably. "I feel the draft myself." And he covered himself with his plumed castor.

M. de Rivarol changed color. He quivered visibly with anger, and was a moment controlling himself before he ventured to speak. M. de Cussy was obviously very ill at ease.

"Sir," said the baron, frostily, "you compel me to remind you that the rank you hold is that of *capitaine de vaisseau*, and that you are in the presence of the General of the Armies of France by Sea and Land in America. You compel me to remind you further that there is a deference due from your rank to mine."

"I am happy to assure you," said Captain Blood, "that the reminder is unnecessary. I am by way of accounting myself a gentleman, although I may not look like one at present; and I should not account myself that were I capable of anything but courtesy to those whom nature or fortune may have placed above me, or to those who, being placed beneath me in rank, may labor under a disability to resent my lack of it.

It was a neatly intangible rebuke. M. de Rivarol bit his lip. Captain Blood swept on without giving him time to reply—

"Thus much being clear, shall we proceed to business?"

M. de Rivarol's hard eyes considered him a moment:

"Perhaps it will be best," said he. He took up a paper. "I have here a copy of the articles into which you entered with M. de Cussy. Before proceeding further, I have to observe that M. de Cussy has exceeded his instructions in admitting you to one-fifth of the prizes taken. His authority did not warrant his going beyond one-tenth."

"That is a matter between yourself and M. de Cussy, my general."

"Oh, no. It is a matter between myself and you."

"Your pardon, my general. The articles

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are signed. So far as we are concerned, the matter is closed. Also, out of consideration for M. de Cussy, we should not desire to be witnesses of the rebukes you may consider that he deserves."

"What I may have to say to M. de Cussy is no concern of yours."

"That is what I am telling you, my general."

"But—*nom de nom!*—it is your concern, I suppose, that we can not award you more than one-tenth share." M. de Rivarol smote the table in exasperation.

"You are quite certain of that, M. le Baron—that you can not?"

"I am quite certain that I will not."

Captain Blood shrugged and raised his eyebrows.

"In that case," said he, "it but remains for me to present my little account for our disbursements and compensation for our derangement in coming hither. That settled, we can part friends, M. le Baron. No harm has been done."

"What the —— do you mean?" The baron was on his feet, leaning forward across the table.

"Is it possible that I am obscure? My French is perhaps not of the purest, but——"

"Now look you here, *monsieur le filibustier*, I am not a man with whom it is safe to play the fool, as you may very soon discover. You have accepted the service of the king of France—you and your men; you hold the rank and draw the pay of a *capitaine de vaisseau*, and these, your officers, hold the rank of *lieutenants*. These ranks carry obligations which you would do well to study, and penalties for failing to discharge them which are something severe.

"The first obligation of an officer is obedience. I commend it to your attention. You are not to conceive yourselves, as you appear to be doing, my allies in the enterprises I have in view; but my subordinates. In me you behold a commander to lead you and not a companion or an equal. You understand me, I hope."

"Oh, be sure that I understand," Captain Blood laughed. He was recovering his normal self amazingly under the inspiring stimulus of conflict. The only thing that marred his enjoyment was the circumstance that he had not shaved.

"I forget nothing, I assure you, my general. I do not forget, for instance, as you appear to be doing, that the articles we signed are the condition of our service; and the articles provide that we receive one-fifth share. Refuse us that, and you cancel our articles. Cancel our articles and you cancel our services with them. From that moment we cease to have the honor to hold rank in the navies of the king of France."

There was more than a murmur of approval from his three captains.

RIVAROL glowered at them, checkmated.

"In effect——" M. de Cussy was beginning timidly.

"In effect, *monsieur*, this is your doing," the baron flashed on him, glad to have some one into whom he could sink his angry fangs. "You should be broke for it. You bring the king's service into disrepute; you force me, his majesty's representative, into an impossible position."

"Is it impossible to award us the one-fifth share?" quoth Captain Blood, silkily. "In that case, there is no need for heat or for injuries to M. de Cussy. M. de Cussy knows that we would not have come for less. We depart again upon your assurance that you can not award us more, and things are as they would have been had M. de Cussy adhered rigidly to his instructions. I have proved, I hope, to your satisfaction, M. le Baron, that if you repudiate the articles you can neither claim our services nor hinder our departure—not in honor."

"Not in honor, sir? What the —— do you mean by that? Do you imply that any course that were not in honor would be possible to me?"

"I do not imply it, because it would not be possible," said Captain Blood. "We should see to that. Therefore it is not worth implying. It is, my general, for you to say whether the articles are repudiated."

The baron sat down.

"I will consider the matter," he said sullenly. "You shall be advised of my resolve."

Captain Blood rose, his officers rose with him. Together they removed themselves from the august and irate presence of the General of the King's Armies by Land and Sea in America.

There followed for M. de Cussy an extremely bad quarter of an hour. M. de Cussy, in fact, deserved sympathy. His self-sufficiency was blown from him by the

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haughty M. de Rivarol, as down from a thistle by the winds of Autumn. The general of the king's armies abused him—this man who was governor of Hispaniola—as if he were a lackey. Having exhausted abuse, he proceeded to indignities.

Since he accounted that M. de Cussy had proved himself unworthy of the post he held, the baron took over the responsibilities of that post for as long as he might remain in Hispaniola, and to give effect to this he began by bringing soldiers from his ships, and setting his own guard in M. de Cussy's castle.

Out of this trouble followed quickly. Wolverstone coming ashore next morning in the picturesque garb he affected, his head swathed in a colored handkerchief, was jeered at by an officer of the newly landed French troops. Not accustomed to being jeered at, Wolverstone replied in kind and with interest. The officer passed to insult, and Wolverstone struck him a blow that felled him, and left him only the half of his poor senses. Before noon, by M. de Rivarol's orders, Wolverstone was under arrest in the castle.

The baron had just sat down to dinner with M. de Cussy when the negro who waited on them announced Captain Blood. Peevishly, M. de Rivarol bade him be admitted, and there entered into his presence a spruce and modish gentleman, dressed with care and somber richness in black and silver, his clear-cut, copper-colored face scrupulously shaven, his long black hair in ringlets that fell to a collar of fine point.

In his right hand the gentleman carried a broad black hat with a scarlet ostrich-plume, in his left a long ebony cane. His stockings were of silk, a bunch of ribbons masked his garters, and the black rosettes on his shoes were finely edged with gold.

For a moment M. de Rivarol did not recognize him. For Blood looked ten years younger than yesterday.

"I come inopportunely," said the captain, courteously. "My apologies. My business could not wait. It concerns, M. de Cussy, Captain Wolverstone of the *Lachesis*, whom you have placed under arrest."

"It was I who placed him under arrest," said M. de Rivarol.

"Indeed! But I thought that M. de Cussy was governor of Hispaniola."

"Whilst here, *monsieur*, I am the supreme authority. It is as well that you should understand it."

"Perfectly. But it is not possible that you are aware of the mistake that has been made."

"Mistake, do you say!"

"I say mistake. On the whole it is polite of me to assume a mistake. Also, it is expedient. It will save discussions. Your people have arrested the wrong man, M. de Rivarol. Instead of the French officer, who used the grossest provocation, they have arrested Captain Wolverstone. It is a matter which I beg you to reverse without delay."

M. DE RIVAROL'S hawk-face flamed scarlet. His dark eyes bulged.

"Sir, you—you are insolent, I think!" Normally a man of the utmost self-possession, he was so rudely shaken now that he actually stammered.

"*M. le baron*, you are childish. This is the New World. It is not merely new; it is novel to one reared amid the superstitions of the Old. That novelty you have not yet had time, perhaps, to realize, so I overlook the offensive epithet you have used. But justice is justice in the New World as in the Old, and injustice as intolerable here as there. Now justice demands the enlargement of my officer, and the arrest and punishment of yours. That justice I invite you, with submission, to administer."

"With submission?" snorted the baron, in furious scorn.

"With utmost submission, *monsieur*. But at the same time I will remind *M. le baron* that my buccaneers number six hundred; your soldiers five hundred; and M. de Cussy will inform you of the interesting fact that any one buccaneer is equal in action to at least three troops of the line. I am perfectly frank with you, monsieur, to save time and hard words. Either Captain Wolverstone is instantly set at liberty, or we must take measures to set him at liberty ourselves. The consequences may be appalling. But it is for you to say, *M. le baron*."

M. de Rivarol was white to the lips. In all his life he had never been so bearded and defied. But he controlled himself.

"You will do me the favor to wait in the anteroom, *M. le capitaine*. I desire a word with M. de Cussy. You shall presently be informed of my decision."

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When the door had closed, the baron loosed his fury upon the head of the governor.

"So, these are the men you have enlisted in the king's service, the men who are to serve under me—men who do not serve, but dictate, and this before the enterprise that has brought me from France is even under way. What explanations do you offer me, M. de Cussy? I warn you that I am not pleased with you. I am, in fact, as you may perceive, exceedingly angry."

The governor seemed to shed his chubbiness. He drew himself stiffly erect.

"Your rank, monsieur, does not give you the right to rebuke me; nor do the facts. I have enlisted for you the men that you desired me to enlist. It is not my fault if you do not know how to handle them better. As Captain Blood has told you, this is the New World."

"So, so!" M. de Rivarol smiled malignantly. "Not only do you offer no explanation, but you venture to put me in the wrong. Almost I admire your temerity. But there!" He waved the matter aside. He was supremely sardonic. "It is, you tell me, the New World, and—new worlds, new manners, I suppose. In time I may conform my ideas to this new world, or I may conform this new world to my ideas." He was menacing on that.

"For the moment, I must accept what I find. It remains for you, *monsieur*, who have experience of these savage by-ways, to advise me out of that experience how to act."

"*M. le baron*, it was folly to have arrested this buccaneer captain. It would be a madness to persist. We have not the force to meet force."

"In that case, *monsieur*, perhaps you will tell me what we are to do with regard to the future. Am I to be dictated to at every turn by this man Blood? Is the enterprise upon which we are embarked to be conducted as he decrees? In short, am I, the king's representative in America, to be at the mercy of these rascals?"

"Oh, by no means. I am enrolling volunteers here in Hispaniola, and I am raising a corps of negroes. I compute that when this is done we shall have a force of a thousand men, the buccaneers apart."

"But in that case why not dispense with them?"

"Because their skill and experience in the class of warfare before us will render them always the sharp edge of any weapon that we may forge. At the same time we shall have a sufficient force to keep them in control. For the rest, *monsieur*, they have certain notions of honor. They will stand by their articles, and so that they are justly dealt with, they will deal justly and give no trouble. I have experience of them, and I pledge you my word for that."

M. de Rivarol condescended to be mollified. It was necessary that he should save his face, and in a degree the governor afforded him the means to do so, as well as a certain guarantee for the future in the further force he was raising.

"Very well," he said. "Be so good as to recall this Captain Blood."

The captain came in, assured and very dignified. M. de Rivarol found him detestable, but dissembled it.

"*M. le capitaine*, I have taken counsel with *M. le gouverneur*. From what he tells me, it is possible that a mistake has been committed. Justice, you may be sure, shall be done. To ensure it, I shall myself preside over a council to be composed of two of my senior officers, yourself and an officer of yours. This council shall hold at once an impartial investigation into the affair, and the offender, the man guilty of having given provocation, shall be punished."

Captain Blood bowed. It was not his wish to be extreme.

"Perfectly, *M. le baron*. And now, sir, you have had the night for reflection on this matter of the articles. Am I to understand that you confirm or that you repudiate them?"

M. DE RIVAROL'S eyes narrowed. His mind was full of what M. de Cussy had said—that these buccaneers must prove the sharp edge of any weapon that he might forge. He could not dispense with them. He perceived that he had blundered tactically in attempting to reduce the agreed share. Withdrawal from a position of that kind is ever fraught with loss of dignity.

But there were those volunteers that M. de Cussy was enrolling to strengthen the hand of the king's general. Their presence might admit anon of the reopening of this question. Meanwhile he must retire in the best order that he could.

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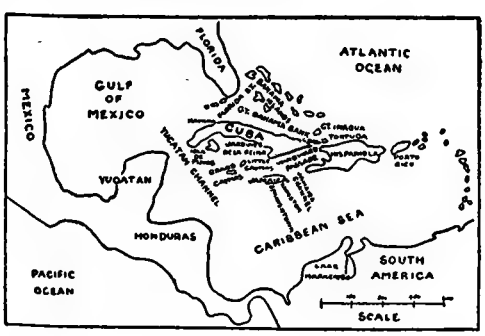
"I have considered that, too," he announced. "And whilst my opinion remains unaltered, I must confess that since M. de Cussy has pledged us, it is for us to fulfil the pledge. The articles are confirmed, sir."

Captain Blood bowed again. In vain M. de Rivarol looked searchingly for the least trace of a smile of triumph on those firm lips. The buccaneer's face remained of the utmost gravity.

Wolverstone was set at liberty that afternoon, and his assailant sentenced to two months' detention. Thus harmony was restored. But it had been an unpromising beginning, and there was more to follow shortly, of a similar discordant kind.

Blood and his officers were summoned a week later to a council which sat to determine their operations against Spain. M. de Rivarol laid before them a project for a raid upon the wealthy Spanish town of Cartagena. Captain Blood professed astonishment. Sourly invited by M. de Rivarol to state his grounds for it, he did so with the utmost frankness.

"Were I General of the King's Armies in America," said he, "I should have no hesitation or doubt as to the best way in which to serve my royal master and the French nation. That which I think will be as obvious to M. de Cussy as it is to me, is that we should at once invade Spanish Hispaniola, and reduce the whole of this fruitful and splendid island into the possession of the king of France."



"That may follow," said M. de Rivarol. "It is my wish that we begin with Cartagena."

"And in our absence, a Spanish invasion of French Hispaniola is possible. If we begin by reducing the Spaniards here, that possibility will be removed. We shall have added to the crown of France the most coveted possession in the West Indies. The enterprise offers no particular difficulty; it may be speedily accomplished, and once accomplished, it would be time to look further afield. That would seem the logical order in which this campaign should proceed."

He ceased, and there was silence. M. de Rivarol sat back in his chair, the feathered end of a quill between his teeth. Presently he cleared his throat and asked a question.

"Is there anybody else who shares Captain Blood's opinion?"

None answered him. His own officers were overawed by him; Blood's followers naturally preferred Cartagena, because offering greater chances of loot. But they were not sufficiently concerned to thwart their captain.

"You seem to be alone in your opinion," said the baron, with his vinegary smile.

The Captain laughed outright. The baron's haughty airs and graces had so imposed upon Blood that it was only now that at last he perceived the fellow's peddling spirit. Therefore he laughed; there was really nothing else to do. But his laughter was charged with more anger even than contempt. He had been deluding himself that he had done with piracy.

The conviction that this French service was free of any taint of that was the only consideration that had induced him to accept it. Yet here was this supercilious gentleman, who dubbed himself General of the Armies of France, proposing a plundering, thieving raid which, when stripped of its mean, transparent mask of legitimate warfare, was revealed as piracy of the most flagrant kind.

M. de Rivarol, intrigued by his mirth, scowled upon him disapprovingly.

"Why do you laugh, *monsieur?*"

"Because I discover here an irony that is supremely droll. You, *Monsieur le baron*, General of the King's Armies by Land and Sea in America, propose an enterprise of a purely buccaneering character; whilst I, the buccaneer, am urging one that is more concerned with upholding the honor of France."

M. de Rivarol perceived nothing of the kind. M. de Rivarol, in fact, was extremely angry. He bounded to his feet, and every man in the room rose with him—save only M. de Cussy, who sat on with a grim smile

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on his lips. He, too, read the baron like an open book, and reading him, despised him.

"*Monsieur le filibustier*," cried Rivarol, in a thick voice. "It seems that I must again remind you that I am your superior officer."

"My superior officer! You! Lord of the world! Why, you are just a common pirate! Ah! But you shall hear the truth for once, and that before all these gentlemen who have the honor to serve the king of France. It is for me, a buccaneer, a sea-robber, to stand here and tell you what is in the interest of French honor and the French crown. Whilst you, the French king's appointed general, neglecting this, are for spending the king's resources against an outlying settlement of no account and shedding French blood in seizing a place that can not be held, only because it has been reported to you that there is much gold in Cartagena, and that the plunder of it will enrich you.

"It is worthy of the huckster who sought to haggle with us about our share, and to beat us down after the articles pledging you were already signed. If I am wrong—let M. de Cussy say so. If I am wrong let me be proven wrong, and I will beg pardon. Meanwhile, *monsieur*, I withdraw from this council. I will have no further part in your deliberations. I accepted the service of the king of France with intent to honor that service.

"I can not honor that service by lending countenance to a waste of life and resources in raids upon unimportant settlements, with plunder for their only object. The responsibility for such decisions must rest with you, and with you alone. I desire M. de Cussy to report me to the ministers of France.

"For the rest, *monsieur*, it merely remains for you to give me your orders. I await them aboard my ship—and anything else, of a personal nature, that you may feel I have provoked by the terms I have felt compelled to use in this council. *Monsieur le baron*, I have the honor to wish you good-day."

He stalked out, and his three captains—although they thought him mad—rolled after him in loyal silence.

M. DE RIVAROL was gasping like a landed fish. The stark truth had robbed him of speech. When he recovered it, it was to thank Heaven vigorously that the council was relieved of Captain Blood's own act of that gentleman's further participation in its deliberations. Inwardly M. de Rivarol burned with shame and rage. The mask had been plucked from him, and he had been held up to scorn—he, the General of the King's Armies by Sea and Land in America.

Nevertheless, it was to Cartagena that they sailed in the middle of March. Volunteers and negroes had brought up the forces directly under M. de Rivarol to a thousand men. With these he thought he could keep the buccaneer contingent in order and submissive.

They made up an imposing fleet, led by M. de Rivarol's flagship *Victorieuse*, a mighty vessel of eighty guns. Each of the four other French ships was at least as powerful as Blood's *Colleen*, which was of forty guns. Followed the lesser buccaneer vessels, the *Elizabeth*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*, and a dozen frigates laden with stores, besides canoes and small craft in tow.

III

THEY only just missed the Jamaica fleet with Bishop, which sailed North for Tortuga two days after their own southward passage.

Having crossed the Caribbean in the teeth of contrary winds, it was not until the first days of April that the French fleet hove in sight of Cartagena, and M. de Rivarol summoned a council aboard his flagship to determine the method of assault.

"It is of importance, *messieurs*," he told them, "that we take the city by surprize, not only before it can put itself into a state of defence, but before it can remove its treasures inland. I propose to land a force sufficient to achieve this to the north of the city tonight after dark." And he explained in detail the scheme upon which his wits had labored.

He was heard respectfully and approvingly by his officers, scornfully by Captain Blood, and indifferently by the other buccaneer captains present. For it must be understood that Blood's refusal to attend councils had related only to those concerned with determining the nature of the enterprise to be undertaken.

Captain Blood was the only one among them who knew exactly what lay ahead. Two years ago he had himself considered a

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raid upon the place, in circumstances which he was presently to disclose.

The baron's proposal was one to be expected from a commander whose knowledge of Cartagena was confined to what might be derived from maps. Geographically and strategically considered, it is a curious place. It stands almost four-square, screened east and north by hills, and it may be said to face south upon the inner of two harbors by which it is normally approached. The entrance to the outer harbor, which is in reality a lagoon some three miles across, lies through a neck known as the Boca Chica—or Little Mouth—and is defended by a fort.

A long strip of densely wooded land to westward acts here as a natural breakwater, and as the inner harbor is approached another strip of land thrusts across at right angles from the first, towards the mainland on the east. Just short of it, this ceases, leaving a deep but very narrow channel, a veritable gateway, into the secure and sheltered inner harbor. Another fort defends this second passage.

East and north of Cartagena lies the mainland, which may be left out of account. But to the west and north-west, this city, so well guarded on every other side, lies directly open to the sea. Beyond a strip of beach, and its own stout walls, it appeared to have no other defences.

But those appearances were deceptive, and they had utterly deceived M. de Rivarol, when he devised his plan. He now informed Captain Blood that the honor of opening the assault was to be accorded to the buccaneers.

Captain Blood understood the intention perfectly. For the buccaneers the dangers; for M. de Rivarol the honor, glory and profit of the enterprise.

"It is an honor which I must decline," said he, quite coldly.

Wolverstone grunted approval, and Hagthorpe nodded. Christian, who himself was of a cold, calculating temperament, looked at his leader calmly expectant. The French officers—there were six of them present—stared their haughty surprize at Captain Blood, while the baron challengingly fired a question at him.

"How? You decline it, sir? You decline to obey orders, do you say?"

"I understood, *M. le baron*, that you summoned us to deliberate upon the means to be adopted."

"Then you understood amiss, *M. le capitaine*. You are here to receive my orders. I have already deliberated, and I have decided. I hope you understand."

"Oh, I understand," laughed Blood. "You have deliberated, you say, and you have decided. But unless your decision rests upon a wish to destroy my buccaneers, you will alter it when I tell you what lies ahead. This city of Cartagena looks very vulnerable on the northern side, all open to the sea as it apparently is. Ask yourself, *M. le baron*, how came the Spaniards who built it where it stands, to have been at such trouble to fortify it to the south, if from the north it is so easily assailable?" That gave M. de Rivarol pause.

"The Spaniards," Blood pursued, "are not quite the fools you are supposing them. Let me tell you, *messieurs*, that two years ago I made a survey of Cartagena as a preliminary to raiding it. I came hither with some friendly trading Indians, myself disguised as an Indian, and in that guise I spent a week in the city and studied carefully all its approaches.

"On the side of the sea, where it looks so temptingly open to assault, there is shoal water for over half a mile out—far enough out, I assure you, to ensure that no ship shall come within bombarding range of it. It is not safe to venture nearer land than three-quarters of a mile, and the city stands fully half a mile back from the beach."

"But our landing will be effected in canoes and *piraguas* and open boats," cried an officer, impatiently.

"In the calmest season of the year, the surf will hinder any such operation. And you will also bear in mind that if landing were possible as you are suggesting, that landing could not be covered by the ships' guns. In fact, it is the landing parties would be in danger from their own artillery."

"If the attack is made by night, as I propose, covering will be unnecessary. You should be ashore in force before the Spaniards are aware of the intent."

"You are assuming that Cartagena is a city of the blind, that at this very moment they are not conning our sails and asking themselves who we are and what we intend."

"But if they feel themselves secure from the north, as you suggest," cried the baron,

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impatiently, "that very sense of security will lull them."

"Perhaps. But then, they are secure."

"Nevertheless, we make the attempt," said the obstinate baron.

"If you still choose to do so after what I have said, you are of course the person to decide. But I do not lead my men into fruitless danger."

"If I command you——" the baron was beginning. But Blood unceremoniously interrupted him.

"M. LE BARON, when M. de Cussy engaged us on your behalf, it was as much for our knowledge and experience of this class of warfare as for our strength. I have placed my own knowledge and experience in this particular matter at your disposal. I will add that I abandoned my own project of raiding Cartagena, not being in sufficient strength at the time to force the entrance of the harbor, which is the only way into the city."

M. de Rivarol bit his lip in chagrin. His gloomy eye smoldered as it considered the self-contained buccaneer.

"But if I command you to go—to make the attempt?" he asked. "Answer me, *monsieur*, let us know once for all where we stand, and who commands this expedition."

"Positively, I find you tiresome," said Captain Blood, and he swung to M. de Cussy, who sat there gnawing his lip, intensely uncomfortable. "I appeal to you, *monsieur*, to justify me to the general."

M. de Cussy started out of his gloomy abstraction. He cleared his throat. He was clearly nervous.

"In view of what Captain Blood has submitted——"

"Oh, to the —— with that!" snapped Rivarol. "It seems that I am followed by poltroons. Look you, *M. le capitaine*, since you are afraid to undertake this thing, I myself will undertake it. The weather is calm, and I count upon making good my landing. If I do so, I shall have proved you wrong, and I shall have a word to say to you tomorrow which you may not like. I am being very generous with you, sir." He waved his hand regally. "You have leave to go."

It was sheer obstinacy and empty pride that drove him, and he received the lesson he deserved. The fleet stood in during the afternoon to within a mile of the coast, and under cover of darkness three hundred men, of whom two hundred were negroes—the whole of that contingent being employed—were pulled away for the shore in the canoes, *piraguas* and ships' boats. Rivarol's pride compelled him, however much he may have disliked the venture, to lead them in person.

The first six boats were caught in the surf, and pounded into fragments before their occupants could extricate themselves. The thunder of the breakers and the cries of the shipwrecked warned those who followed, and thereby saved them from sharing the same fate. By the baron's urgent orders they pulled away again out of danger, and stood about to pick up such survivors as contrived to battle towards them. Close upon fifty lives were lost in the adventure, together with half a dozen boats stored with ammunition and light guns.

M. de Rivarol went back to his flagship an infuriated, but by no means a wiser, man. Wisdom—not even the pungent wisdom experience thrusts upon us—is not for such as him. His anger embraced all things, but focused chiefly upon Captain Blood. By some warped process of reasoning, he held Captain Blood chiefly responsible for this misadventure.

He went to bed considering furiously what he should say to Captain Blood on the morrow. He was awakened at dawn by the rolling thunder of guns. Emerging upon the poop in nightcap and bedgown, he beheld a sight that increased his unreasonable and unreasoning fury. The four buccaneer ships under canvas were going through extraordinary maneuvers half a mile off the Boca Chica, and little more than half a mile away from the remainder of the fleet, and from their flanks flame and smoke were belching each time they swung broadside to the great round fort that guarded that narrow entrance. The fort was returning the fire vigorously and viciously. But the buccaneers timed their broadsides with extraordinary judgment to catch the defending ordnance reloading, then as they drew the Spaniards' fire, they swung away again, not only taking care to be ever moving targets but, further, to present no more than bow or stern to the fort when the heaviest cannonades were to be expected.

Gibbering and cursing, M. de Rivarol stood there and watched this action so presumptuously undertaken by Blood on his own responsibility. The officers of the

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Victorieuse crowded round him, but it was not until M. de Cussy came to join the group that he opened the sluices of his rage. And M. de Cussy invited the deluge that now caught him. He had come up rubbing his hands and taking a proper satisfaction in the energy of the men whom he had enlisted.

"Aha, M. de Rivarol!" he laughed. "He understands his business, this Captain Blood. He'll plant the lilies of France on that fort before breakfast."

The baron swung upon him, snarling.

"He understands his business, eh? His business, M. de Cussy, let me tell you, is to obey my orders, and I have not ordered this. *Parbleu!* When this is over, I'll deal with him for his —— insubordination."

"Surely, *M. le baron*, he will have justified it if he succeeds."

"Justified it! Ah! Can a soldier ever justify acting without orders?" He raged on furiously, his officers supporting him out of their detestation of Captain Blood.

MEANWHILE the fight went merrily on. The fort was suffering badly. Yet for all their maneuvering the buccaneers were not escaping punishment. The starboard gunwale of the *Atropos* had been hammered into splinters, and a shot had caught her astern in the coach. The *Elizabeth* was badly battered about the forecastle, and the *Colleen's* maintop had been shot away, while towards the end of that engagement the *Lachesis* came reeling out of the fight with a shattered rudder, steering herself by sweeps.

The absurd baron's fierce eyes positively gleamed with satisfaction.

"I pray Heaven they may sink all his infernal ships," he cried in his frenzy.

But Heaven didn't hear him. Scarcely had he spoken than there was a terrific explosion, and half the fort went up in fragments. A lucky shot had found the powder magazine.

It may have been a couple of hours later, when Captain Blood, as spruce and cool as if he had just come from a levee, stepped upon the quarter-deck of the *Victorieuse* to confront M. de Rivarol, still in bedgown and nightcap.

"I have to report to *M. le baron* that we are in possession of the fort on Boca Chica. The standard of France is flying from what remains of its tower, and the way into the outer harbor is open to your fleet."

M. de Rivarol was compelled to swallow his fury, though it choked him. The jubilation among his officers had been such that he could not continue as he had begun. Yet his eyes were malevolent, his face pale with anger.

"You are fortunate, M. Blood, that you succeeded," he said. "It would have gone very ill with you had you failed. Another time be so good as to await my orders, lest you should afterwards lack the justification which your good fortune has procured you this morning."

Blood smiled with a flash of white teeth, and bowed.

"I shall be glad of your orders now, general, for pursuing our advantage. You realize that speed in striking is the first essential."

Rivarol was left gaping a moment. Absorbed by his ridiculous rage, he had considered nothing. But he recovered quickly.

"To my cabin, if you please," he commanded, haughtily, and was turning to lead the way when Blood arrested him.

"With submission, my general, we shall be better here. The scene of our coming action is laid out like a map." He waved his hand toward the lagoon, the country flanking it, and the considerable city standing back from the beach. "If it is not a presumption in me to offer a suggestion——" He paused. M. de Rivarol looked at him sharply, suspecting irony. But the swarthy face was bland, the keen blue eyes steady.

"Let us hear your suggestion," he consented.

Blood pointed out the fort at the mouth of the inner harbor, which was just barely visible above the trees on the intervening tongue of land. He announced that its armament was less formidable than that of the outer fort which they had reduced, but on the other hand the passage was very much narrower than the Boca Chica, and before they could attempt to make it in any case, they must dispose of those defences. He proposed that the French ships should enter the outer harbor, and proceed at once to bombardment.

Meanwhile, he would land three hundred buccaneers and some artillery on the eastern side of the lagoon, beyond the fragrant garden islands dense with richly bearing fruit-trees, and proceed simultaneously to storm the fort in the rear. Once this were

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captured, it would be for M. de Rivarol to garrison to the fort, whilst Captain Blood would sweep on with his men, and seize the church of Nuestra Señora de la Poupa, plainly visible on its hill immediately eastward of the town. That dominant position held, the surrender of the city should quickly follow.

SUPERCILIOUS until that moment, and disposed for his own pride's sake to treat the buccaneer's suggestions with cavalier criticism, M. de Rivarol's manner suddenly changed. Swift possession of the city meant possession of its treasure. He became alert and brisk, went so far as to commend Captain Blood's plan, and issued orders that action might be taken upon it at once.

It is not necessary to follow that action step by step. Blunders on the part of the French marred its smooth execution, and the indifferent handling of their ships led to the sinking of two of them in the course of the afternoon by the fort's gunfire. But by evening, owing largely to the irresistible fury with which the buccaneers stormed the place from the landward side, the second fort had surrendered, and before dusk Blood and his men, with some ordnance hauled thither by mules, dominated the city from the heights of Nuestra Señora de la Poupa.

At noon on the morrow, shorn of defences and threatened with bombardment, Cartagena sent offers of surrender to M. de Rivarol. Puffed up with pride at a victory for which he took the entire credit, the baron dictated his terms. He demanded that all public effects and office accounts be delivered up; that the merchants surrender all moneys and goods held by them for their correspondents; the inhabitants could choose whether they would remain in the city or depart.

But those who went must first deliver up all their property, and those who elected to remain must surrender half and become the subjects of France; religious houses and churches should be spared; but they must present accounts of all moneys and valuables in their possession.

Cartagena agreed, having no choice in the matter, and on the next day, which was the fifth of April, M. de Rivarol entered the city and proclaimed it now a French colony, appointing M. de Cussy its governor. Thereafter he proceeded to the cathedral, where very properly a Te Deum was sung in honor of the conquest. This by way of grace, whereafter M. de Rivarol proceeded to devour the city. The only detail in which the French conquest of Cartagena differed from an ordinary buccaneering raid was that under the severest penalties no soldier was to enter the house of any inhabitant.

But this apparent respect for the persons and property of the conquered was based in reality upon M. de Rivarol's anxiety lest a doubloon should be abstracted from all the wealth that was pouring into the treasury opened by the baron in the name of the king of France. Once the golden stream had ceased, he removed all restrictions, and left the city a prey to his men, who proceeded further to pillage it of that part of their property which the inhabitants who became French subjects had been assured should remain inviolate.

The plunder was enormous. In the course of four days over a hundred mules laden with gold went out of the city, and down to the boats waiting at the beach to convey the treasure aboard the ships.

IV

DURING the capitulation, and for some time after, Captain Blood and the greater portion of his buccaneers had been at their post on the heights of Nuestra Señora de la Poupa, utterly in ignorance of what was taking place. Blood, although the man chiefly, if not solely responsible for the swift reduction of that city, was not even shown the deference of being invited to the council of officers which with M. de Rivarol determined the terms of the capitulation.

In his odd frame of mind, he was content to smile his contempt of the French general. Not so, however, his captains, and still less his men. Resentment smoldered among them for awhile, and at last flamed out when they had been a week at Cartagena. Blood pacified them temporarily by undertaking to voice their grievance to the baron, and went off in quest of him to that end.

He found him in offices which he had set up, with a staff of clerks to register the treasure brought in and to cast up the surrendered account-books with a view to ascertaining precisely what were the sums to be delivered up.

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"*M. le baron,*" said he, "I must speak frankly, and you must suffer it. My men are on the point of mutiny."

M. de Rivarol looked him over with a faint lift of the eyebrows.

"Captain Blood, I too will speak frankly; and you too must suffer it. If there is a mutiny, you and your captains shall be held personally responsible. The mistake you make is in assuming with me the tone of an ally, whereas I have given you clearly to understand from the beginning that you are simply in the position of having accepted service under me. Your proper apprehension of that fact will save the waste of a deal of words."

Blood contained himself with difficulty. One of these fine days, he felt that for the sake of humanity he must slit the comb of this supercilious, arrogant cockerel.

"You may define our positions as you please," said he. "I am concerned with facts; chiefly with the facts that we entered into definite articles with you. Those articles provide for a certain distribution of the spoil. My men are not satisfied."

"Of what are they not satisfied?" demanded the baron.

"Of your honesty, M. de Rivarol."

A blow in the face could scarcely have taken the Frenchman more aback. He stiffened, and drew himself up, his eyes blazing, his face of a deathly pallor. The clerks at the tables laid down their pens, and awaited the explosion in a sort of terror.

The great gentleman delivered himself in a voice of concentrated rage.

"Do you really dare so much, you and the dirty thieves that follow you? *Parbleu!* You shall give me satisfaction for that word, though it entail a yet worse dishonor to meet you. Faugh!"

"I will remind you," said Blood, "that I am speaking not for myself but for my men. It is they who are not satisfied, they who threaten that unless satisfaction is afforded them, and promptly, they will take it."

"Take it?" said Rivarol, trembling in his rage. "Let them attempt it, and——"

"Now don't be rash. My men are within their rights, as you are aware. They demand to know when this sharing of the spoil is to take place."

"God give me patience!" burst out the furious general. "How can we share the spoil before it has been completely gathered?"

"They are led to believe that it is gathered, and anyway they view with suspicion that it should all be stowed aboard your ships, and remain in your possession. They say that hereafter there will be no ascertaining what the spoil really amounts to."

"But—name of Heaven!—I have kept books. They are there for all to see."

"They do not wish to see account-books; few of them can read. They want to view the treasure itself. They know—you compel me to be blunt—that the accounts have been falsified. Your books show the spoil of Cartagena to amount to some ten million livres. The men know—and they are very skilled in these computations—that it exceeds the enormous total of forty millions. They insist that the treasure itself be produced, and weighed in their presence, as is the custom among the Brethren of the Main."

"I have nothing to do with filibuster customs. I am a leader of armies, not of plundering thieves."

"Oh, but of course!" Blood's irony laughed in his eyes. "But I warn you that unless you yield to this just demand, you may look for trouble, and it would not surprize me if you never leave Cartagena at all, nor convey a single gold piece home to France."

The argument continued yet awhile, to be concluded, at last, by an ungracious undertaking from M. de Rivarol to submit. He considered that in an encounter he might conceivably defeat the buccaneers. But conceivably he might not. And even if he did, the effort would be so costly to him in men that he might not thereafter find himself in sufficient strength to hold what he had seized.

HE ANNOUNCED that he would make the necessary preparations, and that if Captain Blood and his officers would wait upon him on board the *Victorieuse* tomorrow morning, the treasure should be produced, and their fifth share surrendered into their own keeping.

Among the buccaneers that night there was hilarity over the sudden abatement of M. de Rivarol's monstrous pride. But when the next dawn broke over Cartagena, the only ships to be seen were the *Colleen* and the *Elizabeth* riding at anchor, and the *Atropos* and the *Lachesis* careened on the beach for repair of the damage sustained in the bombardment. The French ships

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were gone. They had been warped out of the harbor under cover of night, and three sails, faint and small on the horizon, to westward, was all that remained to be seen of them. The absconding M. de Rivarol had gone off with the treasure, taking with him the troops and the mariners he had brought from France. He had left behind him at Cartagena not only the empty-handed buccaneers, whom he had swindled, but also M. de Cussy and the volunteers and negroes from Hispaniola, whom he had swindled no less.

The two parties were fused into one by their common fury, and before the exhibition of it the inhabitants of that ill-fated city were stricken with a deeper terror than they had yet known since the coming of this expedition.

Captain Blood alone set a curb upon his deep chagrin. He had promised himself that before parting from M. de Rivarol he would present a reckoning for all the petty affronts and insults to which that unspeakable fellow—now proved a scoundrel—had subjected him.

"We must follow," he declared. "Follow and punish."

At first that was the general cry. Then came the consideration that only two of the buccaneer ships were seaworthy—and these could not accommodate the entire force, particularly being at the moment indifferently victualled for a long voyage.

The crews of the *Lachesis* and *Atropos* and their captains, Wolverstone and Christian, with them, renounced the intention. After all there would be a deal of treasure still hidden in Cartagena. They would remain behind to extort it whilst fitting their ships for sea. Let Blood and Hagthorpe and those who sailed with him do as they pleased.

There was a moment when it nearly came to a battle between the two parties into which the buccaneers were thus divided, and meanwhile those French sails were growing less and less visible on the horizon. Blood was reduced to despair. If he went off now, Heaven knew what would happen to the city, the temper of those he was leaving being what it was. Yet if he remained, it would simply mean that his own and Hagthorpe's crews would join in the Saturnalia, and so increase the hideousness of events now inevitable.

Swiftly he resolved—being compelled to it by all the circumstances. Within the hour, the water-casks at least replenished and stowed aboard, the *Colleen* and the *Elizabeth* put to sea upon that angry chase.

Blood sat in his cabin, his head in his hands, torment in the eyes that stared straight before him, when his quartermaster and best friend Jerry Pitt came to find him.

"What now, Peter?" cried the fair-haired young Devonshire mariner, who like himself was a victim of the Monmouth rising, and with him had taken to this other outlawry when they escaped together from the slavery into which they had been transported. "Lord, man, ye're never fretting over this business of Rivarol!"

"No," said Blood, thickly. And for once he was communicative. It may well be that he must vent the thing that oppressed him or be driven mad by it. "But if she knew! If she knew! O God! I had intended to have done with piracy, and I thought to have done with it for ever. Yet here have I been committed by this scoundrel to the worst piracy that ever I was guilty of. Think of Cartagena! Think of the hell those devils will be making of it now! And I must have that on my soul!"

"Nay, Peter—not on your soul; but on Rivarol's. It is that dirty thief who has brought this about. What could you have done to prevent it?"

"I would have stayed if it could have availed."

"It could not, and you know it. So why repine?"

"There is more than that to it," groaned Blood. "What now? What remains? Loyal service with the English was made impossible for me. Loyal service with France has led to this; and that is equally impossible hereafter. What remains, then? Piracy? I have done with it. Egad, I believe the only thing left is to go and offer my sword to the king of Spain."

But something remained—the last thing he could have expected—something toward which they were rapidly sailing over the tropical sunlit sea.

Heading a course for Hispaniola, since they judged that thither must Rivarol go to refit before attempting to cross to France, the *Colleen* and the *Elizabeth* plowed briskly northward with a moderately favorable wind for two days and nights without ever catching a glimpse of their quarry.

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The third dawn brought with it a haze which circumscribed their range of vision, and begat an apprehension that M. de Rivarol might escape them altogether.

Their position then—according to the log kept by Jerry Pitt—was approximately 75°, 30′ W. Long. by 17°, 45′ N. Lat., so that they had Jamaica on their larboard beam some thirty miles to westward, and, indeed, away to the north-west, faintly visible as a bank of clouds, appeared the great ridge of the Blue Mountains, whose peaks were thrust into the clear upper air above the low-lying haze. The wind, to which they were sailing very close, was westerly, and it bore to their ears a booming sound as of surf breaking upon a lee-shore.

"Guns!" said Pitt, who stood with Blood upon the quarter-deck. Blood nodded, listening.

"Ten miles away, perhaps fifteen—somewhere off Port Royal, I should judge," Pitt added. Then he looked at his captain. "Does it concern us?" he asked.

"Guns off Port Royal—that should argue Colonel Bishop at work. And against whom should he be in action but against friends of ours? I think it may concern us. Anyway we'll stand in to investigate. Bid them put the helm over."

CLOSE-HAULED they tacked aweather, guided by the sound of combat which grew in volume and definition as they approached it. Thus for an hour perhaps. Then, as, telescope to his eye, Blood raked the haze, expecting at any moment to behold the battling ships, the guns abruptly ceased. But they held to their course, nevertheless, with all hands on deck, eagerly, anxiously scanning the sea ahead. And presently an object loomed into view, which soon defined itself for a great ship on fire. As the *Colleen*, with the *Elizabeth* following closely, raced nearer on their northwesterly tack, the outlines of the blazing vessel grew clearer. Presently her masts stood out sharp and black above the smoke and flames, and through his telescope Blood made out plainly the pennon of St. George fluttering from her maintop.

"An English ship!" he cried.

He scanned the seas for the conqueror in the battle of which they had this grim evidence, and at last as they drew closer to the doomed vessel they made out the shadowy outlines of three tall ships, some three or four miles away, standing in towards Port Royal. The first and natural assumption was that they must belong to the Jamaica fleet, and that the burning vessel was a defeated buccaneer, and because of this they sped on to pick up the three boats that were standing away from the blazing hull. But Jerry Pitt, who, through the telescope, was examining the receding squadron, observed things apparent only to the trained mariner, and made the incredible announcement that the largest of these three vessels was the *Victorieuse!*

They took in sail and hove to as they came up with the drifting boats, laden to capacity with survivors. And there were others adrift on some of the spar and wreckage with which the sea was strewn, who must be rescued.

One of the boats bumped alongside the *Colleen*, and up the entrance ladder came first a slight, spruce little gentleman in a coat of mulberry satin laced with gold, whose wizened, yellow, rather peevish face was framed in the curls of a heavy black periwig. His modish and costly apparel had nowise suffered by the adventure through which he had passed, and he carried himself with the assurance of a man of rank.

Here, quite clearly, was no buccaneer, He was closely followed by one who in every particular, save that of age, was his physical opposite, corpulent, in a brawny vigorous way, with a full, round, weather-beaten face, whose mouth was humorous, and whose eyes were blue and twinkling. He was well-dressed, without fripperies, and bore with him an air of authority.

As the little man stepped from the ladder into the waist, whither Captain Blood had gone to receive him, his sharp, ferrety black eyes swept the uncouth ranks of the assembled crew of the *Colleen*.

"And where the —— may I be now?" he demanded irritably. "Are you English, or what the —— are you?" he challenged Blood.

"I have the honor to be Irish, sir. My name is Blood—Captain Peter Blood, and this is my ship the *Colleen*, all very much at your service."

"Blood!" shrilled the little man. "O 'Sblood! A pirate." He swung to the colossus who followed him—"A —— pirate, Van der Kuylen. Rend my vitals, but we're come from Scylla to Charybdis."

"So?" said the other gutturally, and again

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"So?" Then the humor of it took him, and he yielded to it.

"——! What's to laugh at, you porpoise?" spluttered mulberry-coat. "A fine tale this'll make at home. Admiral Van der Kuylen first loses his fleet in the night, then has his flagship fired under him by a French squadron, and ends all by being captured by a pirate. I'm glad you find it matter for laughter. Since, for my sins, I happen to be with you, I'm —— if I do."

"There's a misapprehension, if I may make so bold as to point it out," said Blood quietly. "You are not captured, gentlemen, you are rescued. When you realize it, perhaps it will occur to you to acknowledge the hospitality I am offering you. It may be poor, but it is the best at my disposal."

The fierce little gentleman stared at him.

"I think you permit yourself to be ironical," he disapproved him and proceeded at last to introduce himself. "I am Lord Willoughby, King William's governor-general of the West Indies, and this is Admiral Van der Kuylen, commander of His Majesty's West Indian fleet, at present mislaid somewhere in this —— Caribbean Sea."

"King William?" quoth Blood, and he was conscious that his officers behind him were edging near, sharing his wonder. "And who may be King William, and of what country may he be king?"

In a wonder greater than his own, Lord Willoughby stared back at him. At last:

"I am alluding to His Majesty William of Orange, who has been king of England for two months and more."

There was a moment's silence, until Blood realized what he was being told.

"D'ye mean, sir, that they've roused themselves at home, and kicked out that scoundrel James and his gang of ruffians?"

His lordship's smile brought lines like gashes into his leathery cheeks.

"'Slife! Hadn't you heard? Where the —— have you been at all?"

Captain Blood informed him briefly. Further explanations followed. King James was fled to France, and living under the protection of King Louis, wherefore, and for other reasons, England was now at war with France. That was how it happened that the Dutch admiral's flagship had been attacked by M. de Rivarol's fleet that morning, from which it clearly followed that in his voyage from Cartagena the Frenchman must have spoken some ship that gave him news of the state of things at home.

AFTER that, with renewed assurances that aboard his ship they should be honorably entreated, Captain Blood led the governor-general and the admiral to his cabin, what time the work of rescue went on. Blood's mind was in a turmoil. If King James were dethroned and banished, there was an end to his own outlawry, and to that of many of his followers, proscribed for participation in the Monmouth rising.

It became possible for him to return home and take up his life again at the point where it was so unfortunately interrupted four years ago. The thing so filled his mind, moved him so deeply, that he must afford it expression. In doing so, he revealed of himself more than he knew or intended to the astute little gentleman who watched him so keenly the while.

"Go home if you will," said his lordship, when Blood paused. "You may be sure that none will harass you, considering what it was that drove you to your piracy. But should you choose first to serve King William out here during this war, your knowledge of the West Indies and your skill, of which we have heard a deal, should earn you the gratitude of the present government. You should consider it. ——, sir, it is a rare opportunity that you are given."

"That your lordship gives me," Blood amended. "I am very grateful. But at the moment, I confess, I can consider nothing but the great news. It alters the shape of the world. I must accustom myself to view it as it now is, before I can determine my own place in it."

Pitt came in to report that the work of rescue was at an end, and the men picked up —some forty-five in all—safe aboard the two buccaneer ships. He asked for orders. Blood rose.

"I am negligent of your lordship's concern in my consideration of my own. You'll be wishing me to land you at Port Royal."

"At Port Royal?" The little man squirmed wrathfully on his seat. Wrathfully and at length he informed Blood that they had put into Port Royal last evening to find its deputy-governor absent. "He had gone on some wild-goose chase to Tortuga after buccaneers, taking the whole of the fleet with him. So I was informed by

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Major Mallard, who appears to be governing in his absence. This although word of my coming had reached him before he sailed. And the fool, knowing this, and knowing that there's war with France, has left the place wholly unprotected, save by a ramshackle fort that can be reduced to rubble in an hour."

Blood leaped to his feet.

"Does Rivarol know this?" he cried.

It was the Dutch admiral who answered him.

"Would he go dere if he did not? He take some brisoners. Berhabs dey tell him. Berhabs he make dem tell. Id is a gread obbordunidy."

His lordship snarled like a mountain-cat.

"That knave Bishop shall answer for it with his head if there's any mischief done through this desertion of his post. What if it were deliberate, eh? What if this is his way of serving King James from whom he held his office?"

Captain Blood was generous.

"Hardly so much. It was just vindictiveness that urged him. It's myself he's hunting at Tortuga, my lord. But, I'm thinking that while he's about it I'd best be looking after Jamaica for King William." He laughed with more mirth than he had used in the last two months. "Set a course for Port Royal, Jerry, and make all speed. We'll be level yet with M. de Rivarol, and wipe off some other scores at the same time."

Both Lord Willoughby and the admiral were on their feet.

"But you are not equal to it, ——!" cried his lordship. "Any one of the Frenchman's three ships is a match for both yours, man."

"In guns—aye," said Blood, and he smiled. "But there's more than guns that matter in a sea-fight. If your lordship would like to see an action fought as an action should be fought, this is your opportunity."

Both stared at him.

"But the odds!" cried his lordship.

"Id is imbossible," said Van der Kuylen, shaking his great head. "Seamanshib is much. Bud guns is guns."

"If I can't defeat him, I can sink my ships in the channel, and block him in until Bishop gets back from his wild-goose chase with his fleet, or until your own squadron turns up."

"And what good will that be, pray?" demanded Willoughby.

"I'll be after telling you. Rivarol is a fool to take this chance, considering what he's got aboard. He carries in his hold the treasure plundered from Cartagena, amounting to forty million livres." They jumped at the mention of that colossal sum. "He has gone into Port Royal with it. Whether he defeats me or not, he doesn't come out of Port Royal with it again, and that treasure shall find its way into King William's coffers, after, say, one-tenth share shall have been paid to my buccaneers. Is that agreed, Lord Willoughby?"

His lordship stood up, and shaking back the cloud of lace from his wrist, held out a delicate white hand.

"Captain Blood, I discover greatness in you," said he.

"Sure it's your lordship has the fine sight to perceive it," laughed the captain.

"Yes, yes! Bud how vill you do id?" growled Van der Kuylen.

"Come on deck, and it's a demonstration I'll be giving you before the day's much older."

V

"VHY do you vait, mein friend?" growled Van der Kuylen.

"Aye, in —— 's name!" snapped Willoughby.

It was the afternoon of that same day, and the two buccaneer ships, rocked gently with idly flapping sails under the lee of the long spit of land forming the great natural harbor of Port Royal, and less than a mile from the straits leading into it, which the fort commanded. It was two hours and more since they had brought up thereabouts, having crept thither unobserved by the city and by M. de Rivarol's ships, and all the time the air had been a-quiver with the roar of guns from sea and land, announcing that battle was joined between the French and the defenders of Port Royal.

"You said you vould show us zome fine dings. Where are dese fine dings?"

Blood faced them, arrayed for battle in back-and-breast of steel. He smiled.

"I'll not be trying your patience much longer. Indeed, I notice already a slackening in the fire. But it's this way, now. Sure there's nothing at all to be gained by precipitancy, and everything to be gained by delay."

Lord Willoughby eyed him suspiciously.

"Ye think that in the meantime Bishop may come back, or Admiral Van der Kuylen's fleet appear."

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"Sure now I'm thinking nothing of the kind. What I'm thinking is that in his engagement with the fort M. de Rivarol, who's a lubberly fellow when all's said, will be taking some damage that may make the odds a trifle more even. Sure, it'll be time enough to go forward when the fort has shot its bolt."

"Aye, aye." The sharp approval came like a cough from the little governor-general. "Ye're entirely right. Ye've the qualities of a great commander, Captain Blood. I beg your pardon for having misunderstood you."

"And that's very handsome of your lordship. Ye see, I have some experience of this kind of action, and whilst I'll take any risk that I must, I'll take none that I needn't. But——" He broke off to listen. "Aye, I was right. The fire's slackening. It'll mean the end of Mallard's resistance in the fort. Ho, there, Jerry!"

He leaned on the carved rail and bawled his orders crisply. The bo'sun's pipe shrilled out, and in a moment the ship that had seemed to slumber there awoke to life. Came the padding of feet along the decks, the creaking of blocks and the hoisting of sail. The helm was put over hard, and in a moment they were moving, the *Elizabeth* following, ever in obedience to the signals from the *Colleen*, whilst Ogle the gunner, whom he had summoned, was receiving Blood's final instructions before plunging down to his station on the main deck.

Within a quarter of an hour they had rounded the head, and stood in to the harbor mouth, within saker shot of Rivarol's three ships, to which they abruptly disclosed themselves. The fort was a smoking rubbish heap, and the victorious Frenchman with the lily standard trailing from his mastheads was sweeping forward to snatch the prize whose defences he had shattered.

Blood scanned the French ships and chuckled. The *Victorieuse* and the *Medusa* appeared to have taken no more than a few scars; but the third vessel, the *Baleine*, listing heavily to larboard so as to keep the great gash in her starboard flank well above water, was out of account.

"You see!" he cried to Van der Kuylen, and without waiting for the Dutchman's approving grunt, he shouted an order: "Helm hard-a-port!"

The sight of that great red ship with her gilt beak-head and open ports swinging broadside on, must have given check to Rivarol's soaring exultation. Yet before he could move to give an order, before he could well resolve what order to give, a volcano of fire and metal burst upon him from the buccaneer, and his decks were swept by the murderous scythe of that broadside. The *Colleen* held to her course, giving place to the *Elizabeth*, which, following closely, executed the same maneuver.

And then while still the Frenchmen were confused, panic-stricken by an attack that took them so utterly by surprize, the *Colleen* had circled and was returning in her tracks, presenting now her larboard guns, and loosing her second broadside in the wake of the first. Came yet another broadside from the *Elizabeth*, and then Blood's trumpeter sent a call across the water, which Hagthorpe perfectly understood.

"On now, Jerry," he cried. "Straight into them before they recover their wits. Stand by there! Prepare to board! Hayton —the grapnels! And pass the word to the gunner in the prow to fire as fast as he can load."

He discarded his feathered hat, and covered himself with a steel head-piece, which a negro lad had brought him. Briskly he explained himself to his two guests. "Boarding is our only chance here. We are too heavily outgunned."

Of this last the fullest demonstration followed quickly. The Frenchmen having recovered their wits at last, both ships swung broadside on, and concentrating upon the *Colleen*, as the nearer and heavier of their assailants, volleyed upon her jointly at almost the same moment.

Unlike the buccaneers, who had fired high to cripple them above decks, the French fired low to smash the hull of their assailant. The *Colleen* rocked and staggered under that terrific hammering, although Pitt kept her headed towards the French so that she should offer the narrowest target. For a moment she seemed to hesitate, then she plunged forward again, her beakhead in splinters, her forecastle smashed, and a gaping hole forward, that was only just above the waterline. Indeed, to make her safe from bilging, Blood ordered a prompt jetissoning of the forward guns, anchors, water-casks, and whatever else was movable.

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MEANWHILE, the Frenchmen going about, gave the like reception to the *Elizabeth*. The *Colleen*, indifferently served by the wind, pressed forward to come to grips. But before she could accomplish her object, the *Victorieuse* had loaded her starboard guns again, and pounded her advancing enemy with a second broadside at close quarters. Amid the thunder of cannon, the rending of timbers, and the screams of maimed men, the half-wrecked *Colleen* plunged and reeled into the cloud of smoke that concealed her prey, and then from Hayton went up the cry that she was going down by the head.

Blood's heart sank. And then in that very moment of his despair, the blue and gold flank of the *Victorieuse* loomed through the smoke. But even as he caught that enheartening glimpse he perceived, too, how sluggish now was their advance, and how with every second it grew more sluggish. They must sink before they reached her.

Thus, with an oath, opined the Dutch admiral, and from Lord Willoughby there was a word of blame for Blood's seamanship in having risked all upon this gambler's throw of boarding.

"There was no other chance!" cried Blood, in broken-hearted frenzy. "If ye say it was desperate and foolhardy, why so it was; but the occasion and the means demanded nothing else. I fail within an ace of victory."

But they had not yet completely failed. Hayton himself and a score of sturdy rogues his whistle had summoned were crouching for shelter amid the wreckage of the forecastle with grapnels ready. Within nine or ten yards of the *Victorieuse*, when their way seemed spent, and their forward deck already awash under the eyes of the jeering, cheering Frenchmen, those men leaped up and forward, and hurled their grapnels across the chasm. Of the four they flung two reached the Frenchman's quarter-deck, and fastened there. Quick as lightning those sturdy buccaneers threw themselves upon the chain of one of these, neglecting the other, to warp the ships together. Blood, watching from his own quarter-deck, sent out his voice in a clarion call:

"Musketeers to the prow!"

The musketeers, at their station in the waist, obeyed him with the speed of men who know that in obedience is the only hope of life. Fifty of them darted forward instantly, and from the ruins of the forecastle they blazed over the heads of Hayton's men, mowing down the French soldiers, who, unable to dislodge the irons which had bitten deeply into the timbers of the *Victorieuse*, were themselves preparing to fire upon the grapnel crew.

Starboard to starboard the two ships swung together with a jarring thud. By then Blood was down in the waist, judging and acting with the hurricane speed the occasion demanded.

Sail had been lowered by slashing away the tackle that held the yards. The advance guard of boarders, a hundred strong, was ordered to the poop, and his grapnel men were posted and prompt to obey his command at the very moment of impact. As a result the foundering *Colleen* was literally kept afloat by the half-dozen grapnels that in an instant moored her firmly to the *Victorieuse*.

Willoughby and Van der Kuylen on the poop had watched in breathless amazement the speed and precision with which Blood and his desperate crew had gone to work:

And now he came racing up, his bugler sounding the charge, the main host of the buccaneers following him, whilst the vanguard led by the gunner Ogle, who had been driven from his guns by water in the main-deck, leaped shouting to the prow of the *Victorieuse*, to whose level the high poop of the water-logged *Colleen* had sunk. Led now by Blood himself, they launched themselves upon the French like hounds upon the stag they have brought to bay. After them went others, until all had gone, and none but Willoughby and the Dutchman were left to watch the fight from the poop of the abandoned *Colleen*.

For fully half an hour that battle raged aboard the Frenchman. Beginning in the prow, it surged through the forecastle to the waist, where it reached a climax of fury. The French resisted stubbornly, and they had the advantage of numbers to encourage them. But for all their stubborn valor, they were slowly pressed back and back, across the decks that were dangerously canted to starboard by the pull of the water-logged *Colleen*.

The buccaneers fought with the desperate fury of men who know that retreat is impossible, for there was no ship to which they could retreat, and here they must prevail and make the *Victorieuse* their own, or perish. And their own they made her in the end, and at a cost of nearly half their

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numbers. Driven to the quarter-deck, and thence at last to the poop, the surviving defenders, urged on by the infuriated Rivarol, maintained awhile their desperate resistance. But in the end, Rivarol went down with a bullet in his head, and the French remnant, numbering scarcely a score of whole men, called for quarter.

Even then Blood's labors were not at an end. The *Elizabeth* and the *Medusa* were tight-locked, and Hagthorpe's followers were being driven back aboard their own ship for the second time. Prompt measures were demanded. Whilst Pitt and his seamen bore their part with the sails, and Ogle went below with a gun-crew, Blood ordered the grapnels to be loosed at once. Lord Willoughby and the Admiral were already aboard the *Victorieuse*. As they swung off, to the rescue of Hagthorpe, Blood, from the quarter-deck of the conquered vessel, looked his last upon the ship that had served him so well, the ship that had become to him almost as a part of himself.

A moment she rocked after her release, then slowly and gradually settled down, the water gurgling and eddying about her topmasts, all that remained visible to mark the spot where she had met her victorious death. As he stood there, above the ghastly shambles of the waist, some one spoke behind him.

"I think, Captain Blood, that it is necessary I should beg your pardon for the second time. Never before have I seen the impossible made possible by resource and valor, or victory so gallantly snatched from defeat."

He turned, and presented to Lord Willoughby a formidable front. His head-piece was gone, his breast-plate dinted, his right sleeve a rag hanging from his shoulder about a naked arm. He was splashed from head to foot with blood, and there was blood from a scalp-wound that he had taken matting his hair and mixing with the grime of powder on his face to render him unrecognizable. But from that horrible mask two vivid eyes looked out preternaturally bright, and from those eyes two tears had plowed each a furrow through the grime of his cheeks.

VI

WHEN the cost of the victory came to be reckoned, it was found that of three hundred and twenty buccaneers who had left Cartagena with Captain Blood a bare hundred remained sound and whole. The *Elizabeth* had suffered so seriously that it was doubtful if she could ever again be rendered seaworthy, and Hagthorpe, who had so gallantly commanded her, was among the dead. Against this, on the other side of the account, stood the facts that with a far inferior force and by sheer skill and desperate valor, Blood's buccaneers had saved Port Royal from bombardment and pillage, and they had captured the fleet of M. de Rivarol and seized for the benefit of King William the splendid treasure which she carried.

It was not until the evening of the following day that Van der Kuylen's truant fleet of nine ships came to anchor in the harbor of Port Royal, and its officers, Dutch and English, were made acquainted with their admiral's true opinion of their worth.

Six ships of that fleet were instantly refitted for sea. There were other West Indian settlements demanding the visit of inspection of the new governor general, and Lord Willoughby was in haste to sail for the Antilles.

"And meanwhile," he complained to his admiral, "I am detained here by the absence of this fool of a deputy-governor."

"So?" said Van der Kuylen. "But vhy should dat detain you?"

"That I may break the dog as he deserves, and appoint his successor in some man possessed of a sense of where his duty lies and the ability to perform it."

"Aha! Bud id is nod necessary you remain for dat. And meandime de Vrench vill haf deir eye on Barbados, vhich is not vell defended. You haf here chust de man you vant. He vill require no insdrucshons, dis one. He vill know how to make Bord Royal safe, bedder nor you or me."

"You mean Blood?"

"Of gourse. Gould any man be bedder? You haf seen vhat he can do."

"You think so, too, eh? Egad! I had thought of it; and, rip me, why not? He's a better man than Morgan, and Morgan was made governor."

Blood was sent for. He came, spruce and debonair once more, having exploited the resources of Port Royal so to render himself. He was a trifle dazzled by the honor proposed to him, when Lord Willoughby made it known. It was so far beyond anything that he had dreamed, and he was assailed by doubts of his capacity to undertake so onerous a charge.

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"—— me!" snapped Willoughby. "Should I offer it unless I were satisfied of your capacity? If that's your only objection——"

"It is not, my lord. I had counted upon going home, so I had. I am hungry for the green lanes of England." He sighed. "There will be apple-blossoms in the orchards."

"Apple-blossoms!" His lordship's voice shot up like a rocket, and cracked on the word. "What the ——? Apple-blossoms!" He looked at Van der Kuylen.

The Admiral raised his brows and pursed his lips. His eyes twinkled humorously in his great face.

"So!" he said. "Very boedical!"

My lord wheeled fiercely upon Captain Blood.

"You've a past score to wipe out, my lad!" he admonished him. "You've done something towards it, I admit, and you've shown your quality in doing it. That's why I offer you the governorship of Jamaica in his majesty's name—because I account you the fittest man for the office that I have seen."

Blood bowed low.

"Your lordship is very good. But——"

"Tchah! There's no 'but' to it. If you want your past forgotten, and your future assured, this is your chance. And you are not to treat it lightly on account of apple-blossoms or any other —— sentimental nonsense: Your duty lies here, at least for as long as the war lasts. When the war's over, you may get back to Somerset and cider, or your native Ireland and its potheen; but until then you'll make the best of Jamaica and rum."

Van der Kuylen exploded into laughter. But from Blood the pleasantry elicited no smile. He remained solemn to the point of glumness. His thoughts were on Miss Bishop, who was somewhere here in this very house in which they stood, but whom he had not seen since his arrival. Had she but shown him some compassion——

And then the rasping voice of Willoughby cut in again, upbraiding him for his hesitation, pointing out to him his incredible stupidity in trifling with such a golden opportunity. He stiffened and bowed.

"My lord, you are right. I am a fool. But don't be accounting me an ingrate. If I hesitate it is because there are considerations with which I will not trouble your lordship."

"Apple-blossoms, I suppose?" sniffed his lordship.

THIS time Blood laughed, but there was still a lingering wistfulness in his eyes.

"It shall be as you wish—and very gratefully, let me assure your lordship. I shall know how to earn his majesty's approbation. You may depend upon my loyal service."

"If I didn't, I shouldn't offer you this governorship."

Thus it was settled. Blood's commission was made out and sealed in the presence of Mallard, the commandant, and the other officers of the garrison, who looked on in round-eyed amazement, but kept their thoughts to themselves.

"Now we can go aboud our business," said Van der Kuylen.

"We sail tomorrow morning," his lordship announced.

Blood was startled.

"And Colonel Bishop?" he asked.

"He becomes your affair. You are now the governor. You will deal with him as you think proper on his return. Hang him from his own yard-arm. He deserves it."

"Isn't the task a trifle invidious?" wondered Blood.

"Very well. I'll leave a letter for him. I hope he'll like it."

Captain Blood took up his duties at once. There was much to be done to place Port Royal in a proper state of defence, after what had happened there. He made an inspection of the ruined fort, and issued further instructions for the work upon it, which was to be started immediately.

Next he ordered the careening of the three French vessels, that they might be rendered seaworthy once more. Finally, with the sanction of Lord Willoughby, he marshaled his buccaneers, and surrendered them one-fifth of the captured treasure, leaving it to their choice thereafter either to depart or to enrol themselves in the service of King William.

A score of them elected to remain, and among these was Jerry Pitt, whose outlawry, like Blood's, had come to an end with the downfall of King James.

On the following morning, while Van der Kuylen's fleet was making finally ready for

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the sea, Blood sat in the spacious, white-washed room that was the governor's office, when Major Mallard brought him word that Bishop's homing squadron was in sight.

"That is very well," said Blood. "I am glad he comes before Lord Willoughby's departure. The orders, major, are that you place him under arrest the moment he steps ashore. Then bring him here to me. A moment." He wrote a hurried note. "That to Lord Willoughby aboard Admiral Van der Kuylen's flagship."

Major Mallard saluted and departed. Peter Blood sat back in his chair and stared at the ceiling, frowning. Time moved on. Came a tap at the door, and an elderly negro slave presented himself. Would his excellency receive Miss Bishop?

His excellency changed color. He sat quite still, staring at the negro a moment, conscious that his pulses were drumming. Then quietly he assented.

He rose when she entered, and if he was not as pale as she was, it is because his tan dissembled it. For a moment there was silence. Then she moved forward, began to speak, haltingly, in an unsteady voice, amazing in one usually so calm and deliberate.

"I—I—Major Mallard has just told me——"

"Major Mallard exceeded his duty," said Blood, and because he sought to steady his voice, it became harsh and unduly loud. He saw her start, and stop, and instantly he made amends. "You alarm yourself without reason, Miss Bishop. Whatever may lie between me and your uncle, I shall not follow his example by abusing my position to prosecute a private vengeance. On the contrary, I shall abuse it to protect him. Lord Willoughby's recommendation to me is that I should hang Colonel Bishop. My own intention is to send him back to his plantation in Barbados."

She came slowly forward now. "I—I am glad that you will do this. Glad for your own sake." She held out her hand to him. He considered it critically. Then he bowed over it.

"I'll not presume to take it in the hand of a thief and a pirate," said he, bitterly.

"You are no longer that," she said, and strove to smile.

"Yet I owe you no thanks that I am not," he answered. "I think there's no more to be said, unless it be to assure you also that Lord Julian Wade has nothing to apprehend from me. Is that the assurance that your peace of mind requires?"

"For your own sake—yes. But for your own sake only. I would not have you do anything mean or dishonoring."

"Thief and pirate though I be?"

She clenched her hand, and made a little gesture of despair and impatience.

"Will you never forgive me those words?"

"I'm finding it a trifle hard, I confess. But what does it matter, when all is said?"

Her clear hazel eyes considered him a moment wistfully. Then she put out her hand again.

"I am going, Captain Blood. Since you are so generous to my uncle, I shall be returning to Barbados with him. We are not like to meet again—perhaps never. Won't you say good-by?"

He seemed to rouse himself, to shake off a mantle of deliberate harshness. He took her hand.

"You are returning to Barbados?" he said, slowly. "Will Lord Julian be going with you?"

"Why do you ask that?" She confronted him quite fearlessly.

"Sure now didn't he give you my message, or did he bungle it?"

"Oh, he gave it me. It touched me very deeply. It made me perceive my error and my injustice. I owe it to you that I should say this by way of amend. I judged too harshly where it was a presumption to judge at all."

He was still holding her hand.

"And Lord Julian, then?" he asked, his eyes watching her, bright as sapphires in that copper-colored face.

"Lord Julian will very likely be going home to England."

"But didn't he ask you to go with him?"

"He did. I forgive you the impertinence."

A wild hope leaped to life within him.

"And you? Glory be, ye'll not be telling me ye refused to become my lady, when——"

"Oh! You are insufferable!" She tore her hand from his, and backed away from him. "I should not have come— Good-by."

SHE was speeding to the door. He sprang after her, and caught her. Her face flamed, and her eyes stabbed him like daggers.

"These are pirate's ways, I think! Release me!"

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"Arabella!" he cried, on a note of pleading. "Are ye meaning it? Must I release ye? Must I let ye go and never set eyes on ye again? Or will ye stay and make this exile endurable until we can go home together? Och, ye're crying now! What have I said to make ye cry, my dear?"

"I—I thought you'd never say it," she mocked him through her tears.

"Well, now, ye see, there was Lord Julian, a fine figure of a——"

"There was never, never anybody but you, Peter."

They had, of course, a deal to say thereafter, so much indeed, that they sat down to say it, while time sped on, and Governor Blood forgot the duties of his office. And meanwhile Colonel Bishop's fleet had come to anchor, and the colonel with Lord Julian had landed on the mole.

A CORPORAL'S guard was drawn up to receive him, and in advance of this stood Major Mallard and two others who were unknown to the deputy-governor: one slight and elegant, the other big and brawny.

Major Mallard advanced.

"Colonel Bishop, I have orders to arrest you. Your sword, sir!"

Bishop stared, empurpling, his eyes bulging.

"What the ——? Arrest me? By whose orders, pray?"

"By the orders of the governor of Jamaica," said the elegant little man behind Major Mallard. Bishop swung to him.

"The governor? Ye're mad!" He looked from one to the other. "I am the governor," he announced furiously.

"You were," said the little man, dryly. "But you're broke for abandoning your post without due cause in time of war, and thereby imperiling the settlement of which you had charge. It's a serious matter, Colonel Bishop, as you may find. It rests with your successor entirely whether it's a hanging matter."

Bishop made a noise in his throat, rapped out an oath, and then, shaken by a sudden fear:

"Who the devil may you be?" he asked.

"I am Lord Willoughby, governor general of His Majesty's colonies in the West Indies. You were informed of my coming."

The remains of Bishop's anger fell from him like a cloak. He broke into a sweat of fear. Behind him Lord Julian looked on, his handsome face suddenly white and drawn.

"But, my lord," began the colonel, "it is because——"

"Sir, I am not concerned to hear your reasons," his lordship interrupted him harshly. "I am on the point of sailing and I have not the time. The governor will hear you, and no doubt deal justly by you." He waved to Major Mallard, and Bishop, a crumpled, broken man, allowed himself to be led away.

To Lord Julian, who went with him, since none deterred him, Bishop expressed himself when presently he had sufficiently recovered.

"This is one more item to the account of that scoundrel Blood," he said, through his teeth. "My ——, what a reckoning there will be when we meet!"

Major Mallard turned away his face that he might conceal a smile.

In the hall of the governor's house, the house that so long had been his own residence, Colonel Bishop was detained under guard, while Major Mallard went ahead to announce him. Miss Bishop was still with Peter Blood. Major Mallard's announcement startled them back to realities.

"You will be merciful with him. You will spare him all you can, Peter, for my sake," she pleaded.

"To be sure I will," said Blood. "But I'm afraid the circumstances won't."

She effaced herself, and Major Mallard fetched the colonel.

"His excellency the governor will see you now, sir," said he, and threw wide the door.

Colonel Bishop staggered in, and stood waiting. At the table sat a man of whom for a moment nothing was visible but a carefully curled black head. Then this man raised his eyes. Colonel Bishop made a noise in his throat, and paralyzed by amazement, stared into the face of his excellency the governor of Jamaica, which was the face of the man he had been hunting in Tortuga, to his present undoing.

The situation was best expressed to Lord Willoughby by Van der Kuylen, as the pair stepped aboard the Admiral's flagship:

"Id is very boedigal!" he said, his blue eyes twinkling. "Cabdain Blood is fond of boedry—you remember de abble-blossoms. So? Ha-ha!"

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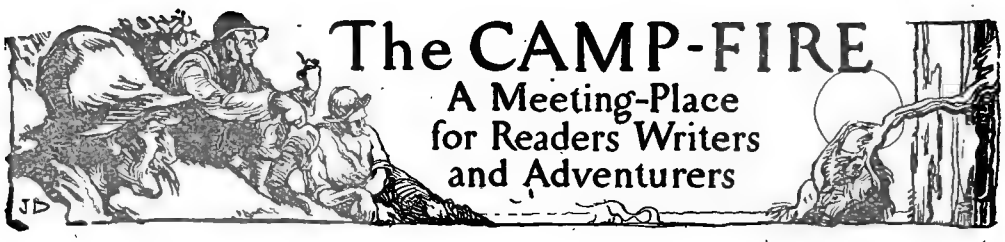

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

IF YOU'LL let me violate Camp-Fire custom a wee bit I'll not cut out, in the following letter, all the complimentary references to our magazine. Some of them wouldn't come out without upsetting part of the letter. Anyhow, it's well to have occasional samples of the loyalty to Camp-Fire and our magazine that is expressed in most of the letters that come in.

It's good to hear from our old-timer comrades of the sea.

Galveston, Texas.

As I have a number before me to-night and see what others have to say at the grand old Camp-Fire, I want to say that many is the time that I would be glad to be by a sure-enough camp-fire. I very seldom get *Adventure* for I am a marine engineer and very seldom in one place long enough to get it sent to me as a regular subscriber, for it never would reach me, as I am here to-day and there to-morrow, and out on first one ship and then another, but get *Adventure* every time that I can.

I read an account of Captain Dingle's trip from New York to Bermuda and his trip in the hurricane and don't see how he made it, for I went through one in 1915 and know how it feels.

AS TO sailors to-day, it's not like it used to be, for we don't have the windjammers now like we used to, and want to say that I went before the mast and had some of that and have been master of power-boats and from that to engineer.

It is great to hear the old-timers tell of their past experience. Have listened hours at a time to them and they will not lay down *Adventure* when they start reading a story of the sea until it is finished, and then one of them will say, "Something happened on the ship that I was on forty years ago just about like that," and then he will fill his pipe and light it before he starts to tell it, and the only difference will be that it took place in some other place in the seven seas.

I have been with all classes and know what the authors are writing about, but the days of the bucko mates and walking the plank are of the past and the seaman of to-day when going aboard is like walking in a hotel, as it is nice as any hotel both for officers and crew. I have been in all classes of boats, and when I get a regular run I will never miss a copy of *Adventure*, then I can have it sent to me and know that if I don't get it before I sail this time that I will get it when I return for I will be coming back here instead of going to some other port.

I will close, but don't think I will ever see this in Camp-Fire, as I may be out to sea by then and hope that it will not be like it was once when we had a

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deck under us but not knowing how soon that it would go down from under us and leave us in the water hundreds of miles from the nearest land and our life-boats carried away, but we fought her through and brought her in when we could see no hope and not one failed to do his part from manning the pumps to bailing. That was a little of the old sailing days that we had and not the first or last.—W. G. McConnell.

FOLLOWING Camp-Fire custom Stanton C. Lapham rises and introduces himself—and a man's philosophy—on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

La Grande, Oregon.

My Dear Camp-Fire—Sounds like a person—friend—what I mean, too. How'dy, all of you. Thanks, fellers; that's a man-grip of a handshake in return.

GLAD to be a chunk on your camp-fire. Hope I am no smudge. In the firelight, your faces all look fine. Aim only to brighten, so we can see each others faces the better.

Friends are the biggest adventure of life. Grizzlies, pirates, wolves, sharks, ships, gold, diamonds—not in it with the thrill of a friend's hand. Hunting for head of the Amazon, nix, compared to snore of friend under your blanket, his smile across a camp-fire, or his hail on the street. Friend—next to mother—most amazing thing in all the world. *Adventure* Camp-Fire means friends. Great scheme, eh, what?

About myself; doesn't matter, but:

Michigan, native State. Came to northern part more than forty-five years ago. Lakes, rivers, woods, game all about. Picked out the best and most beautiful mother in the world. She was left with five, myself the eldest. Now you know the mother she was.

FIRING locomotive at fifteen, engineer early. Came to the farthest West thirty-two years ago. Tried to attend school, some, after first boy came. Hard sledding, making-of-the-pup to some degree, however.

Bread-and-butter problem close. Playground, the Cascades and the great rivers, and waters of the Pacific, from the California line to B. C. Big mountains, rivers, trees, cañons and men make you think and love big, clean things.

After two years in Northern Alaksa, in the gold rush; struck it rich. Returned with over one million in virgin nuggets of experience. Best diggin's in the world for partners. Only one class: Men. Others don't count up there.

Life—Gee, I wonder what's going to happen just around the corner? Every day an adventure. Adventures are not accidents. I am making 'em happen.

Literature—the Good Samaritan, and "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" best short stories ever written.

Aspiration—to be red-blooded, two-handed guy, who can look any man in the eyes and say, "God bless you."

Heaven—On my back, looking up at the glory of sky and stars. The tang of the camp-fire sweet, and its flicker dancing in shadows. The laugh and gurgle and splash and might of a stream near. The yap of a coyote, and the movement and voice of our little brothers of the woods and the earth and stream and air coming to my ear through the silence. A snow-peak, high above, gleaming white in the silver of the moon. And my partner—but who can tell of the love that knits the lives of men in a mighty hand-clasp of friendship?

The Future—"The Light From Over the Range," will be a call to a wonderful Camp-Fire.

I read this somewhere :

"From quiet homes and first beginnin gs
Out to the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning
But laughter and the love of friends."

—Stanton C. Lapham.

HERE are some more letters indorsing the Camp-Fire Expedition idea.

An indorsement from a member of the Appalachian Club, a sample of other indorsements of the general idea without suggestions offered:

Boston.

Just a line before I leave tomorrow morning for the mountains. I have just read your interesting suggestion in "Camp-Fire" about the Expedition. It strikes me as a particularly fine idea. Count on me for ten dollars, anyway. Here's wishing all success to the *Adventure* Expedition.—Arthur Bent.

The following letter tells of a German ship with specie sunk off the Central American coast and of pearl and shell opportunities. The latter, as purely commercial propositions, seem out of our field. Comrade Tatum says he can get the location of the cruiser. Also that Edgar Young and Jack Cilch once thought of getting it. Am writing Edgar Young. If sufficient data could be secured, the plan could be considered, though what international complications would be involved I do not know.

The remainder of the letter follows:

Trujillo, Honduras.

Count me in on the proposition up to $500. Though the article says each member will only be allowed $10, I think that should be non-participants; those who go on the expedition and only those who think it would yield their money's worth either in money returns or in adventure would want to go and I am sure they would think $10 somewhat cramping, or rather, pro rata of any money on an expedition consisting of a company of 10,000 shareholders would be small. I think the members of each individual expedition should be allowed to put as much into it as $100 however. any other expedition they did not participate in to allow 'em only $10. I know that any place the Adventure Expedition's officers would send a party I would like to own a share.

The Museum idea appeals to me also.

I am not in favor of shares of $1 if you print the names, for about a week after the announcement comes out the next *Adventure* won't be a — thing but a string of names.

So when you get ready to send an expedition to this neck of the woods let me know.—Fisher Tatum.

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SOMETHING from comrade Harriman of our writers' brigade, concerning the scout, George Gibbs, of Minnesota:

Los Angeles, Calif.

Gibbs was alive in '84, though slightly humpbacked on account of a Sioux bullet that hit his spine. He was partner with George Northrop and the pair had the reputation of being the best scouts in Minnesota in the sixties. Here is a filler for you, concerning them.

George Gibbs and George Northrop scouted together for seven years without a quarrel. Then they got in a hot one and Northrop went for his gun. Gibbs beat him to it, had him covered when Northrop's gun had just started to lift from the holster.

"Put it up, George! Let go that gun," said Gibbs.

"—— it, Gibbs," said Northrop. "I never took water before any man yet. You've got me foul, but I've a —— good notion to pull and take your shot. How will I feel to know I've backed down?"

"And actually," said Gibbs, telling the story in 1880. "That cuss hesitated for a full minute and a minute is a —— of a long time when guns are in play. I was scared the cuss would really pull and force me to kill him. He was just that kind of a fool."

How is that? And I vouch for the exactness of the account. Gibbs had a farm, which he ran very successfully, and was a model citizen. But how he did ride anybody who undertook to bluff him!—E. E. H.

CONCERNING the historical facts back of his complete novelette in this issue, something from Farnham Bishop. I'll bet that if some one asked us the name of the naval battle that Theodore Roosevelt called the "most important fleet action fought by our navy before the Civil War" most of us wouldn't even know the name of it. If Hugh Pendexter, Farnham Bishop and others of our writers' brigade keep at us, the first thing we know we'll really know something about our own country's history and without having to do any work.

Berkeley, California.

Eleazer Williams is no creature of my imagination. He was a very real man and a good scout in every sense of the word—except the convivial. He was brought up among a family of Mohawk half-breeds, educated in New England, and served as the head of the Secret Corps on the Champlain frontier during the War of 1812, almost precisely as I have told in the story.

DURING the illness resulting from a slight wound received in the land-fighting at Plattsburg (my putting him on the fleet was fiction) and exposure while bringing up the guns in the pursuit afterward, Eleazer Williams decided to become a missionary among his father's people. He had been a Congregationalist but soon joined and was ordained in the Episcopalian church, and sent to labor among the Mohawks.

They and the other Iroquois tribesmen remaining in New York State were being hard-pressed by the advancing white settlers. Williams was instrumental in obtaining new lands for them among the Menomini Indians in Wisconsin and went there himself with a considerable number of New York Indians.

IN 1841 the Prince de Joinville, son of the then-reigning Louis Philippe, King of the French, visited America, and surprized people by going to the obscure settlement of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and by inquiring on the way for the Rev. Eleazer Williams. The two met on October 18, 1841, when the lake steamer carrying the prince and his suite touched at Mackinac and Williams went aboard. According to the testimony of the captain and many of his passengers, the Prince de Joinville started violently as soon as he saw Williams, drew him aside, and remained in close conversation with him during the trip to Green Bay.

They reached Green Bay on the afternoon of the 19th. The first news that greeted Williams on landing was that his infant daughter had died and been buried during his absence.

That evening the prince again shut himself up with Williams. According to the latter, the prince then revealed to the astounded Eleazer that "Williams" was the lost Dauphin, Louis the XVII, and offered practically the same abdication for him to sign that I had *de Fenouil* produce in my story. Williams declined for the same reasons.

The Prince de Joinville and his suite left Green Bay on October 21st, and returned to New York and thence to France.

ELEAZER wrote it all down in his diary, which he had been keeping regularly ever since he was fifteen or so, but took no other steps until a few years later. Then he heard that a Frenchman named Bellanger had died in New Orleans and published a death-bed confession of having abducted the child-king from the Temple and brought him to America and left him among the Mohawks.

Roused by this, Eleazer Williams began to make inquiries and soon made himself talked about. The Rev. J. H. Hanson, another Episcopalian clergyman, met him on a railroad train early in the fifties, became interested in the case, and decided to investigate it. Hanson hurried down to New Orleans, where he found that Bellangers were about as thick as Smiths and that the alleged man who made the alleged dying statement had picked a yellow-fever epidemic to die in, when corpses were being entombed without ceremony and all records were badly kept. The newspaper-files were full of gaps, and the trail was lost and cold.

But nothing can stop or discourage a man who starts out to prove that his favorite candidate is the only genuine Louis XVII, and that Richemont, Naundorff, and the forty or fifty other claimants who kept bobbing up all through the first half of the last century are low-down impostors. If he can't get first-hand evidence, he will grab all the rumors that favor his theory and sneer at everything else.

HANSON wrote a book entitled "The Lost Prince," which for fervid fiction beats anything I ever hope to turn out. He was a pious and honest soul, but absolutely uncritical. He figured out a perfectly good way for the abduction of the child-king

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from the Temple. The trouble was, and is, to account for what happened next. Things were in a rare muddle in that prison and records, witnesses and evidence of all kinds were afterward put out of the way.

There is no connecting link in the evidence between the Temple and old Tom Williams's lodge. The real Bellanger's confession, if there ever was one, is lost.

The Prince de Joinville denied up and down ever having made such a proposition to Eleazer Wiliams. Williams showed Hanson his diary for 1841, where it was written down, in faded ink on yellowed paper, together with the account of the little girl's death and prayers for divine guidance. Both men had the highest reputation for honor and honesty among their contemporaries. And there you are.

NO ONE cares nowadays about the Bourbons. But whether he was a Bourbon or a Mohawk half-breed suffering from delusions of grandeur, Eleazer Williams was an American who did the State good service. The best part of Hanson's book is its reproduction of Williams' war-diary, telling of the work of the Secret Corps. I have checked up its statements again and again and found them absolutely in accord with the facts.

I enclose a few extracts dealing with the Plattsburg campaign.

To make a story and wrap it around the Battle of Lake Champlain, I transposed the 1841 revelations to 1814. They fitted in beautifully with the period of the First Restoration. *De Fenouil* is the man Hanson credits with rescuing Louis XVII from the Temple. I have made him one of the "Ultras," who showed up in Paris in 1814 wearing clothes of the fashion of 1789 and trying to shove the world back twenty-five years.

WHEN I looked up the roster of Sir George Prevost's army, I was astonished to find "Meuron's Regiment of Swiss." Apparently they were never engaged during the campaign. I jumped at the chance to use them for my own vile purposes. If they were really Swiss mercenaries, then it is the only time such troops ever invaded the United States. If they were Swiss settlers in Canada, I apologize to their memory. Perhaps some Canadian reader could enlighten us on that point.

Said Canadian reader will doubtless agree that I have dealt very tenderly with Sir George Prevost. As for Wilkinson, his reputation could hardly be lowered. Before some Southerner shoots me for slandering Wade Hampton, let me explain that the general of the War of 1812 was not the great Confederate cavalry leader but his grandfather.

I HAVE transposed McGlassin's raid on the rocket-battery from the ninth to the tenth of September and condensed the skirmish at Beekmanstown into one spot, whereas it was really spread out over four miles of road. The incident of the red-coated New York Dragoons is from Eleazer Williams' diary and I have before me a letter of Governor Tompkins describing the same uniform and bewailing the lack of horsemanship and sword-practise among the militia cavalry.

I have tried to do justice to both sides in the fighting. I myself have worn the uniform both of the New York National Guard and the Regular Army. Incidentally, I was bound for the training camp at Plattsburg in 1916 when our battery was called out for the Mexican mobilization, which kept me from visiting the spot and getting my local color at first-hand. I have had to work it up from maps and a small library of books. Most of my details are taken from Lossing's "Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812." The text is full of bombast, but the hundreds of pictures are neat little sketches of almost every house and tree that ever had a shot fired near it, drawn by the author on a prolonged tour during the fifties and sixties. In the course of that tour Lossing met Eleazer Williams, who died in 1858, and who told him of the fake news from Vermont that he placed in Prevost's hands by means of an Irish woman on Cumberland Head.

My account of the naval battle is based on Theodore Roosevelt's "Naval War of 1812." He calls it the most important fleet-action fought by our Navy before the Civil War.

MacDonough's arrangement of anchors and kedges for warping his ship around is still included in the text-books of our Navy to-day. Attached are tracings from the plates in Admiral Knight's "Modern Seamanship," which you might run as illustrations, duly credited of course, in the text.—FARNHAM BISHOP.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY

September 5th, 1814. *At night*, 12 *o'clock*. . . A small detachment, headed by my brother John, have gone to spy out the enemy's encampment.

At night, 5 *o'clock*.—A Ranger has just come in, who left the enemy's camp at two o'clock; and at that early hour they were in columns ready to march. I had put the whole corps of *observers* in motion to watch him, who were so faithful and daring as to give intelligence from the very center of the enemy's army in less than thirty hours; the import was frightful, that the enemy was fourteen thousand strong, with a formidable train of artillery —fearful odds against the American army of fifteen hundred men. Under these exciting and distressing circumstances, and at the same time, with strong but respectful request from Generals McComb and Mooers for my cooperation, I am thus at length under the necessity of putting on my armor and buckler, to sustain the honor of the American Government.

(Ante.—"Although I am not strictly bound, according to my office, to take the carnal weapon into my hand.")

To repel the invaders, who are now about twelve miles from Plattsburg, General Mooers advanced this afternoon with seven hundred men to Beekmanstown, and in the evening, Major Wool followed, with two hundred and fifty of the regulars.

Evening. September 6, *at* 10 *o'clock*.—The enemy had been making gradual approaches upon Plattsburg, until this morning, he made a rapid advance in two columns upon two distinct points, and an engagement immediately followed, between Major-General Powers' brigade, supported by a demi-brigade of General Robinson, and General Mooers of the New York militia, supported by a detachment under Major Wool, who set the militia an example of firmness, for the regulars disputed the road with great obstinacy; but the militia could not be prevailed on to stand for any length of time, notwithstanding the exertions of their general and staff-officers. The State Dragoons of New York wore red coats; and they, being on the heights to watch

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the enemy, gave considerable alarm to the militia, who mistook them for the British and feared lest they would be getting in their rear. The field-pieces, however, did considerable execution among the enemy's column; and so undaunted were they that they never deployed in their whole march, but continued pressing in close column, with the exception of a cloud of skirmishers on their right and left. The field-pieces were, finally, ordered to retire across the bridge, and form a battery for its protection and to cover the retreat of the infantry, which was accordingly done. It was here, for the first time, I was initiated how to manage heavier guns than rifles. . . .

September 8.—The Vermont militia have begun to come.

September 9.—The volunteers from Vermont are now arriving by companies and regiments. Colonel Williams of Charlotte, eight hundred strong, landed this afternoon at Peru. Several of our men were killed and wounded in a skirmish at the lower bridge. By the request of Generals Macomb and Mooers, this department was compelled to issue an order to the Rangers, on the 8th inst., to take an officer of the enemy. Accordingly an officer of the artillery was taken, and brought in this evening and presented to the generals.

I have just received a note, in reply to mine, from Colonel Fasset, commanding at Burlington, in which it is proposed to play a *coup de main* upon the British general. Preparations will be made to carry this matter into effect. The same has been submitted to Generals Macomb and Mooers, which was approved. The most active and bravest of the Rangers is selected to perform this difficult and dangerous duty. He accepts, with cheerfulness, the hazardous task.

September 10.—Last night, a corps of the regular troops, under Captain MacGlassin, about 11 o'clock, crossed the Saranac and stormed at the point of the bayonet, a bomb-battery of the enemy, near Weight's printing office. My brother John was the leader of this detachment and was the cause of the death of the engineer of the battery.

September 14.—Toward the close of the day, when the enemy appeared to make his last effort to silence our batteries, though not to that degree to compel me to leave the corps. As soon as it was known, in the morning, that the enemy had retreated, a general order was issued to pursue. Our corps was ordered to follow them, and at seven o'clock we commenced our route for the north, under the equinoctial storm.

The rain had been pouring down with such torrents during the night, as to put the road into such a state as to become almost impassable. It had been passed over, during the night by more than four hundred carts of the enemy, beside his battering train of artillery, so that by 12 o'clock our progress had been but eight miles. The cavalry, riflemen, and light infantry were several hours in advance while we were thus drudging in a road with mud sometimes almost up to our knees. Gun after gun upset and stuck in the quagmires, and the horses were staggering and reeling under their burdens.

Happily for us, in the midst of these difficulties orders came for us to retrace our steps and it was not until after dark that we reached the place whence we took our departure in the morning. On reaching my marquee not a thread of me was dry—shivering under the northwesterly wind, fatigued and hungry my wound had now become quite painful, which no care had been taken of, more than what had been done by my waiter who occasionally washed it with brandy. The wound was not dangerous in its nature and no inconvenience would have resulted from it had I not taken cold from the heavy shower of rain that fell upon us during the night and the following day; to which I was exposed.

CONFINED five weeks under care of old W.,
Oct. 18, 1841. Steamer for Green Bay touches at Mackinac, Prince J. aboard. W. goes aboard.
19.—Converse en route to Green Bay. Afternoon arrive. Infant daughter dead and buried.
10-1 *M.*—Proposition.
Oct. 21.—Prince and suite leave Green Bay.

OUR identification cards and our Camp-Fire buttons go out in a steady stream. Comrades continue to use this office as holding or forwarding address for mail. Questions pour in on "Ask Adventure"—4,378 were answered during 1920. Our new system of Camp-Fire Stations is spreading sturdily over the map. There are more "Lost Trails" inquiries than ever before. Letters of all kinds deluge us.

You can see what that means. Our magazine is not only strong and growing but it is become a kind of institution. A trade-journal and service-giver for the great army of those who like the out-of-doors, yet something vastly more than a trade-journal, for we who read it, write for it and edit it have grown into a comradeship that, I think, has no parallel anywhere.

Whether this is evident or not to the casual reader I do not know, but no man can read our magazine very long without realizing there is something back of it that makes it much more than a magazine.

IF THERE are any doubters I could convince them if I could let them read our daily mail. I think I'd not be tempted to growl sometimes at the snarling kind of critics if these few were not in such marked contrast to the remaining ninety-nine per cent. of you who write or come in. When I've finished my day's mail I always feel as if I'd been shaking hands with real men. I'm not referring to words of praise for the magazine but to the friendly feeling and spirit of those letters—friendly not only to it and to us here in the office but to one another. There are plenty of you to testify to real friendships, grown out of Camp-Fire, between men who had never heard of each other before. And many a kindly service rendered among comrades.

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As to number, well, during 1920 I wrote about 6,000 personal letters and only a minority of them had to do with the ordinary business of running an ordinary magazine. Mr. Noyes wrote from 3,000 to 4,000, many of them, of course, concerned with "Ask Adventure," which is in his charge, but "Ask Adventure" itself is service and friendliness. The others of the staff accounted for some 2,000 to 3,000 more. Say 12,000 personal letters a year, and then add to these a like number of form letters and postcards. A total of 24,000 communications with readers a year. Add 15,000 to 20,000 coming in. Add our talks among ourselves at Camp-Fire and in "Ask Adventure." Do we get better acquainted among ourselves than do other magazine audiences or don't we?

And, believe me, I'm glad we do.

LUCKILY he said I might print the P. S., so here it is along with Kenneth Howell's introducing himself according to Camp-Fire custom. This, however, is his second, not his first, story in our magazine.

Asbury Park, New Jersey.

The opportunity to give hearty greetings to *Adventure* family seems to me like a dream come true. If this sounds too gushing, too exaggerated, just let me tell you that since graduating from Princeton University some six years ago, I have by degrees fallen into the rôle of a failure. Not a picturesque failure, just a chronic failure. A failure at learning to fly, a failure in a western Canadian venture, and a dozen others, and what has seemed the most inexcusable of all to many relatives, a failure in settling down to a sane, conservative career.

However, in 1917, I seemed placed for life on a chicken farm that I had bought. Bang! War! Bang, bang, farm, chickens, money!

As one of the first seventeen gobs of the twenty-three hundred that finally manned the U. S. S. *Leviathan*, I grew to dislike the navy and to love the sea. Twenty crossings of the Atlantic ruined all my chances of being satisfied to live ashore for any great length of time. So, after the war came the engine-rooms of the Merchant Marine service. New failure, for I avoided promotion through sheer lack of interest. The sea, new ports, new countries—this was the only reward I desired.

Then, on a rum-laden ship making a cruise of some 17,000 miles, came a conversation with a shipmate—a shamefaced, tentative suggestion of the possibility of writing. Came one day this Summer a valued letter from Mr. Noyes of *Adventure* accepting my story, "Rule of the Sea." Then from Mr. Hoffman came a cordial invitation to make my bow to Camp-Fire, and here it is, but it's a handshake rather than a bow.—KENNETH HOWELL.

P. S.—In the letter I have left out all details of my sea experience, because they are not the sort you would care for—unjust arrest in an inland port on the River Platte for taking away a knife from a drunken Spanish cook who had it at the throat of a shipmate; justifiable arrest in Buenos Aires as a result of knockout drops stupidly taken in a waterfront bar in Boca, the Barbary Coast of the Argentine. Other more or less undesirable incidents, but all common enough to the life of the merchant sailor under the American flag, right now, other authorities to the contrary. And most of the sordidness of these roughnesses is washed clean when the ship puts to sea and her wake straightens out, unmuddied by the harbor shallows, a white ribbon over the blue water.—K. H.

ANT-BEAR. Here is a case of "Citizen Yurumi" on a rampage:

Have just finished "Citizen Yurumi," by F. St. Mars, a story of peculiar interest to me as I had a peculiar experience with an ant-bear which bears every evidence of being an impossibility when the characteristics of the ant-bear as portrayed by the average natural history are considered. I was in Porto Bello, Panama, in 1911, and accompanied E. A. Goldman of the Smithsonian Institution (Dept. of Agri.) on several trips into the jungle for small birds and reptiles.

ONE evening armed with a 20-gage shotgun and accompanied only by a Cuban mulatto, José, who was armed with a machete and a lantern, I took the old trail out of old Porto Bello to try and flash a deer or *tigré*. I had no flash-light so arranged for José to walk ahead with the light and directed him, when eyes were flashed, to step behind me and hold the light back of my right shoulder. About 1,000 yards up the trail two flaming spots were seen, and José, yelling "Shoot! Shoot!" jumped behind me and held the lantern.

Something was coming at me on the run, a creature on its hind legs, its two arms striking, swinging alternately and rapidly as a man would swing his arms, striking at the right side of a man's face with the right hand and at the left side with the left. It was probably ten yards away at first and, by the time my gun was up, not over ten feet. I fired, and with a groan and moaning noise it turned and ran back on its own trail a few yards, then again turned and made at me. José dropped the lantern and ran. I could see only a dark mass coming at me, grunting and squealing in rage, and I fired again. It still came on. No time to load, so I clubbed the gun and struck. The first blow knocked it flat, but it was up again and at me and only on the third blow, which broke the stock from the barrel, was it stunned. I secured the lantern and lighted it and there on the ground lay the ant-bear, two tiny eyes gleaming and glaring at me with rage, but helpless.

I carried it down to old Porto Bello and across in the launch to the American town, where it died during the night. (The skin came north to the Smithsonian Institution as part of the collection of Mr. Goldman.) It was only after inspecting the remains that any one in town would believe that the animal had actually attacked a man without provocation, but such was actually proven by the two charges of shot, both of which entered the stomach from the front and which were in such a position that they could have entered only when the animal was erect and charging on its hind legs. As for speed, no hound-chased rabbit ever exhibited the speed with which that animal moved. (John Irwin, the wireless

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operator in Porto Bello and now with the office force of the War College in Washington, was one of the Americans who viewed the animal.)

This ant-bear was not cornered. It had a clear trail behind it and could have instantly slipped into dense jungle on either side of the trail. When wounded and well on the way to escape it turned back with great bravery and great speed and forced aggression until helpless.

I wonder if any *Adventure* readers ever saw a snake with feet? I caught one on that trip, a small, catfish-belly white reptile, with two rudimentary feet with prehensile capabilities. It was three-quarters dead when found and several hours dead before I got it into the formaldehyde can, so as I never heard from the "Smithsonian" in regard to it, I presume it was too badly decomposed to stand examination and description.—GEORGE C. MARTIN.

THERE is seldom anything but good humor at our Camp-Fire, but a tart critic earns a tart reply and maybe once in a while we'd better let him get what he earns. Recently a man wrote in cussing out Lewis H. Kilpatrick for general ignorance of local color in one of his stories of the Kentucky mountains. Before the matter was dropped he admitted he was wrong and Mr. Kilpatrick right on all points, so, having frankly apologized to Mr. Kilpatrick, the correspondence was not passed on to Camp-Fire.

In the present case, while the critic gave his name and was quite willing to talk under it, I've taken it out. No use rubbing it in personally, for he's a good comrade and moved largely by a loyal desire to see our magazine accurate at all points. He might, however, have been more courteous in calling attention to Mr. Dunn's "mistake," and a bit more sure of his ground.

Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico.

In your issue of *Adventure* for June 3rd, 1921, you have a novelette, "The Moon Master," to which I feel that as a subscriber and a constant reader for several years, I have a right to object to.

THE author J. Allan Dunn has called it a three-cornered fight between Kanakas and white men. Where in *hell*—and that's the place I mean—does he get Kanakas when he is dealing with Soloman Islanders?

If I am not badly mistaken the word "Kanakas" deals only with the natives of the Hawaian Islands, when those same islands had been brought under the ruling of one man, Kamehameha the Third. I think it was he who subdued the whole of the islands and made himself king. If such is the case, why confound the whole of the South Sea Islanders with or as Kanakas?

Think it will be found that the Samoans, Fiji Islanders, Solomon Islanders and the Hawaiians are a different people; the Samoans and Hawaiians nearly alike, while the Fiji and Solomons are of an entirely different class, having been head-hunters and cannibals, and practically nothing else but color to ally them to the true "Kanaka" *viz.* the Hawaiians.

Please let us know through Camp-Fire columns in regard to this. Being a West Coaster I hate to see a decent people confounded with a lot of beasts.—————.

Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. ——: I am sorry , but you are wrong. Allow me to assure you that if your correction had been such I should have welcomed it.

AS A great many of my readers in *Adventure* and elsewhere know, I write of the Pacific Islands from actual experience. Also when you assail me you assail also Hermann Melville Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London, Louis Beck, Frederick O'Brien and a great many other prominent writers who have lived in the South Seas as I did. I lived in Hawaii for nearly three years and speak their language. I have sailed through the groups and stayed over in many places and I have a working knowledge of the dialects. Even the Century Dictionary and Webster will support my contention.

The Hawaiian word for man is *kane* (*ka-ne*). It is true that at one time the word *kanaka* may have been used as a vulgar term but if you call a Hawaiian to-day a *kanaka* you insult him. This has held good for the past quarter of a century to my own knowledge.

THERE are three groups in the South Seas. Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians. The third are closely allied to the first. You are quite right in supposing the second form a distinct race. Samoans, Hawaiians, Paumotuans, Marquesans and Maoris are all of the same race and language—Polynesian. The only changes are those of slight dialect and the differences consist mainly in consonant changes. *Wahine* (woman) is Hawaiian and Maori. In Tahiti it is *fahine*. Hale (house) is *whare* in New Zealand, *hare* in Samoa. *Aloha* becomes *Talofah* and so on. Tahiti, which means only "the far-off land," is *kahiki* in Hawaiian.

But the Solomon word for man is *tangata*. Yet the boys in Fiji, the Hebrides, the Solomons, the Marshalls would be surprised if they were called anything but *kanakas*. A cannibal is a *kai-kanaka* or *kaikanak*. A man-eater. The Century in its second definition delves to the root of the matter. All labor recruited from the South Seas—brown or black (Poly or Mela-nesian) for the Queensland plantations and for the Hawaiian plantations—in course of time *all* plantations whether sugar or copra—were called *kanakas*. Most of them were Melanesians and of a low type. The Hawaiians to-day resent being called by a term they consider applies only to a plantation recruit.

EVERY planter and trader uses the term for his "boys" of the ship or plantation whether they are from one group or another. Most—ninety-five per cent. of them—are not from Hawaii. On the San Francisco and Pacific Coast water-front up to the Arctic the whalers were largely recruited in the old days by Hawaiians because they were and are notable boatmen. They called them *kanakas*.

But don't call a Hawaiian to-day a *kanaka* or a Samoan. It is more of a slam than to call an Italian a wop or guinea, a South or Central American a spigotty, a Mexican a greaser. The word is used

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in Hawaii when one islander calls the other a "dam *kanaka*." It is not elegant. To those who know—and I must insist that I do—*kanaka* applies to-day exactly as I have used it.

If you want stronger proof than the men I have quoted I should suggest you write to Thrum's Annual, Hawaii, publishers of the Hawaiian dictionary; to Dr. Emerson, Honolulu, whose book on the Hawaiian legends, published by Washington, I illustrated; to the Bishop Museum, Honolulu. I want to include among my fiction names Beatrice Grimshaw.

IF YOU wish to insist upon your phrasing, none of the writers quoted (three of whom I have had the pleasure of knowing personally in the South Seas and elsewhere) got the use of the word "*anywhere in hell*," but from life. I make slips, unfortunately, but not in the use of South Sea words that are common phraseology.

I am sending Mr. Hoffman back your letter with a copy of this. I don't know whether he wants to put it in "Camp-Fire" or not. I should be of the opinion myself that sufficient of the readers know the use of the word correctly and would consider the correspondence unnecessary.

The Polynesian race is more correctly the Malayo-Polynesian. Kane was the name of their beneficent god. Kankaka is of Malayan stock (Fernander). This accounts for its diffusion.

If, as I have written, you will consult your dictionary you will see that the term is *not* one that deals only with the natives of the Hawaiian Islands. Therefore, to quote yourself, you are "badly *mistaken*." Also it was not Kamehameha the Third who conquered the group but Kamehameha the First.

YOUR suggestion that the Fijians and Solomon Islanders ally themselves to the Hawaiians only by color is unfortunate. The Melanesians—sometimes mixed with Papuans—are black with pigment cells. The Hawaiian is brown without pigment cells. His hair is not kinky, his color is only skin deep and dies out in a generation by intermarriage.

This is the light you ask for. I hope you can see it. I have taken some time and pains in my answer as I take time and pains to make my stories accurate and write only of what I know at first hand. Also it seems to me your "where in *hell*—and that's the place I mean," is a wee bit hasty and stressful.

Vd. no tiene razon, amigo. Yo le aseguro a Vd. que.—J. ALLAN DUNN.

IN ACCORDANCE with Camp-Fire custom, Martin D. Schram rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Washington, D. C.

In conforming with the custom for *Adventure's* writers to introduce themselves by giving a short sketch of their lives, I'd like to be able to give something interesting; but there's not much to tell.

I AM twenty-one years of age, a native of Washington, D. C., and have never strayed from home for more than a short period of time. My first job after high school was over was in the office of a twenty-eight mile railroad. I took the dictation of all the officers of the company (there were three). From that job I went to one of our courts as deputy clerk. That was interesting work. If you want to study human nature you'll find many varieties in a court.

After a year or so at the court I got the idea that New York City might be in need of one of my ability. I got a position as junior accountant. Seven months, and home looked pretty good again. The following Summer I spent on Lake George, New York, where I jerked soda for room and board. I'm in Y. M. C. A. work now, studying on the side, and knocking off an occasional story when there's nothing else to do.—MARTIN D. SCHRAM.

A RADIO man passes on to us some dope on his profession:

This is just a horn in, so if you are piled—ditch it. I left Oran, Algeria, December 23rd last and had just bought a copy of November 18th *Adventure*. As usual I turned to the "Camp-Fire" and information sections first and I noticed some one inquiring about radio operations, so thought I would pass along what I know.

Have been a radio man since 1910. Have worked all the Atlantic and Gulf routes; a short time in Mexico and, since parting company with the A. E. F. after a year's sojourn in France, I have been paddling around the Mediterranean and Black Seas in a 5,000-ton cargo steamer. Enough of myself.

OPERATOR'S pay is $100 a month for juniors and $125 for chiefs, one-man ships paying $125. When in domestic ports (U. S.) when ship is not feeding the crew, $3 per day in addition to salary is allowed.

We take on this ship from three to four months for a round trip, generally making eight to ten ports each trip. When the vessel is docked ye operator is a passenger—doll up and step ashore and take in the sights as you please until three to five hours before sailing time.

Operators rank with the deck and engineer officers and have, as a rule, as good quarters as any one in the ship. Usually on the upper deck and quite large. There is always plenty of leisure time at sea, so I fill in and make a little on the side occasionally with a graflex.

Will pass along any information I can to those wanting it.

I enclose a couple of prints (proofs) that may be interesting. In the group the belle? of the town (on the right) is holding a genuine double-back-action-link-motion-come-apartable-handmade Turkish coffee mill which I tried to buy unsuccessfully.—P. H. MANNING.

DON'T forget—in accordance with the vote by readers—*Adventure* is now published three times a month. The 10th, 20th, and the 30th are the dates, with due allowance for February. This is the second issue under the new schedule. And don't forget to be marking down your favorite stories for our annual vote by readers on the best fiction published during the year. —A. S. H.

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Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you, *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of the last issue of each month.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL BUY: June, 1912.—Address MRS. MARGARET LOUISE ANSELL, Y. W. C. A., 14 E. 16th St., New York.

WILL SELL: All issues 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915 (except Jan. and Feb., missing), 1916 (except Jan., Feb., May and June, missing), 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920 (except one July issue, missing). The lot, 15 cents each; any one year, 20 cents each; express collect. Address A. E. GREENWOOD, 212 N. 1st St., Pleasantville, N. J.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Camp-Fire Stations

In their homes or shops some members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to—maintain Stations where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the first issue of each month.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 519 Citizens Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested, inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, 1508 Columbia St., Olympia, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping: nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

3. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. ★ New Zealand; and South Sea Islands Part 1
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

5. South Sea Islands Part 2
CHARLES BROWN, JR., 213 E St., San Rafael, Calif. French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn). Natives, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture.

6. ★ Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, Sydney Press Club, 51 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

7. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
FAY-COOPER COLE, Ph. D., Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

8. New Guinea
DR. ALBERT BUELL LEWIS, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

9. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, 5444 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. History, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

10. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 632 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

11. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

12. Asia, Southern
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine Street, New Orleans, La. Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Borneo. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

13. Russia and Eastern Siberia
MAJOR A. M. LOCHWITZKY (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), care *Adventure*. Petrograd and its province, Finland, northern Caucasus, Primorsk district, island of Sakhalien. Travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

14. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, Niger River to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora, tribal histories, witchcraft.

15. Africa Part 2 Morocco
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

★ (*Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents—in Mr. Mills' case 8 cents—in stamps NOT attached*)

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16. Africa Part 3 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine Street, New Orleans, La. Including the Hoggar Tuaregs. Hunting exploring, traveling, customs.

17. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East Africa
R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

18. ★ Africa Part 5 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East Africa, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan, Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 12 cents.*)

19. Africa Part 6 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, 40 South Clark Street, Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

20. South America. Part 1
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

21. South America. Part 2
P. H. GOLDSMITH, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

22. Central America
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, language, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

23. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 West 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history, industries.

24. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Apartado 168, Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, business and general conditions.

25. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 1
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Height of Land and northern Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry); southeastern Ungava and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

26. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 2
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Ottawa Valley and southeastern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

27. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Georgian Bay and southern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

28. North American Snow Countries Part 4
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Hunters Island and English River district. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

29. North American Snow Countries Part 5
ED. L. CARSON, La Connor, Wash. Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

30. ✠ North American Snow Countries. Part 6
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

31. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 7
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

32. North American Snow Countries Part 8
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, backpacking, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

33. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

34. Western U. S. Part 2
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 West 10th St., Austin, Tex. Texas and Oklahoma. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

35. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. The Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel. Early history of Missouri Valley.

36. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

37. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
LARRY ST. JOHN, Saugatuck, Mich. Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

38. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; river, lake and road travel; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs, and their markets.

39. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Orlando, Fla. Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

40. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Me. Maine. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

WEAPONS, PAST and PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a par particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers, including foreign and American makes. D. WIGGINS, Salem, Ore.

C.—Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800. Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheellock and snaphaunce varieties. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; bait and fly casting and advice; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

MOUNTAINS and MOUNTAINEERING

Especially mountains of New England. Arthur Bent, 333 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines, Porto Rico, and customs receiverships in Santo Domingo and Haiti, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dept. of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters, or for specific data. Address L. S. Rowe, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. C. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Comm., Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dept. of Com., Wash., D. C.

★ (*Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents—in Mr. Beadle's case 12 cents—in stamps NOT attached*)
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Ship's Bells

THE method of telling time on shipboard has been described in this department before, but so many inquiries on the subject have come in since then that it seems worth while to print the same information again:

Question:—"My question may seem very foolish to you, but if I understood it, I could get a lot more pleasure out of the sea stories in *Adventure*.

What do the expressions "six bells," "eight bells," etc., mean? I know they refer to time of day, but I should like to know all of the divisions.

One story refers to eleven o'clock (night) as "six bells." Is there a system to it? Also, does, for example, "eight bells" actually *mean* that a bell sounds eight times?"—H. J. DAY, M. D., Harrisburg, S..D.

Answer, by Mr. B. Brown:—Time on shipboard is measured by "watches" of eight hours each, a watch meaning the length of time that each half of the crew is working on deck. Four hours on and four hours off for the crew was formerly the manner in which all work was divided.

The ship's bell is struck every half-hour, the odd-numbered marking the half-hour and the even number the full hour. "Eight bells" mean either twelve, four or eight o'clock.

The ship's day starts at twelve o'clock, noon. One bell is half-past twelve, two bells one, and so on until four o'clock, "eight bells" and the end of the watch, when the next start is taken.

In old-fashioned ships, in the navy and most of the liners, the bell is struck regularly. In many merchant ships it is only struck at the end of the watch, or at "eight bells." All ships carry the bell, and it is actually struck.

The Castellated Rock Roraima

BOTH Nature and man have made it a landmark, for it is the focal point of the boundaries of three countries, and the cradle of three great rivers—one, the greatest stream in the world:

Question:—"I avail myself of *Adventure's* generosity, and your own, to ask a question that has agitated me for some time. Prefacing the question with a brief statement of the facts leading up to it, here is the subject of my interest:

For some years I have read everything I have been able to procure concerning the mountain called Roraima, which experts have located variously in British Guiana, Venezuela, and Brazil, and about which, I believe, a British and Venezuelan boundary commission is still wrangling. The mystery surrounding the summit of this mysterious mountain is what fascinates me. The accounts of Sir Robert Schomburgk (some fourscore years ago), Mr. Barrington Brown, and Mr. Boddam-Whetham, and the amazing fiction of Mr. Frank Aubrey, known as "The Devil-Tree of El Dorado," as well as the less comprehensive work of Mr. Im Thurn, no doubt are well known to you. A few of these I have been able to get, and now possess.

Messrs. Brown and Boddam-Whetham, visiting the base of the mountain at different times, are agreed that the summit only can be reached by balloon. Thus their books, published many years ago. Mr. Aubrey's romance, published in 1897, is the latest word I have seen on the moot question of Roraima.

All experts agree that astounding discoveries may be made if ever the summit is reached, and the romancers even hint at an unknown race on the high plateau of that summit. That a new knowledge of the indigenous flora and fauna will be gained seems certain, and there is excellent reason to think that the antiquarian gain may be considerable.

In the days of Messrs. Brown and Boddam-Whetham the airplane did not exist; hence their suggestion of balloons.

What I wish to ascertain is whether any attempt since these has been made to reach the summit, whether any has succeeded, whether the airplane has been tried, or can be tried in the nature of the surrounding country, and what particulars you may be able to give along these general lines. Possibly you can refer me to more recent works, or magazine articles, unknown to me, or refer me to some one who actually is in close touch with the curious situation.

I am not planning any attempt upon the mountain myself, although that would be delightful. My immediate interest is purely antiquarian, and that of a student."—VINCENT STARRETT, Chicago, Ill.

Answer, by Dr. Goldsmith:—The castellated rock of Roraima, situated on the boundary of British Guiana, Venezuela and Brazil, which is the source of streams that flow into the Orinoco, the Amazon and the Essequibo and which rises from a slope of six thousand feet above sea-level, is an immense sandstone formation, eight miles long by four wide. The top was first reached in 1884, after many failures. It is an enormous mass of weathered boulders and balanced rocks. Because of the mist and rain that characterize it there are watercourses in every direction, and many falls of misty waters pour over the edges of the cliffs.

In view of the fact that the summit has already been gained without the use of the airplane, no one seems to have thought of trying our modern method of scaling high places.

While the rock in question is extremely interesting and picturesque, it has not given rise to any phenomenal discoveries.

How Petroleum is Found

A FEW remarks on geology, minerals and related subjects that Mr. Edison forgot to put in his questionnaire:

Question:—"I am studying geology and mining engineering, and wish to know something of the mines, minerals and geology of your section. Do you know of any way in which I can get specimens from the mines? I can not get away.

I am especially interested in petroleum geology. Can you tell me anything of the surface indications, methods of exploiting, etc.? Also, as much of the geology and topography of the country as you can."—PVT. CLARENCE M. HARRER, Camp Lewis, Wash.

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"P. S.—The mineral specimens especially interest me."

Answer, by Mr. Whiteaker:—You have a very interesting study—you ought in connection with your geology study to have a copy of E. S. Dana's "Minerals and How to Study Them," and J. D. Dana's "System of Mineralogy." Mineralogy is closely related to chemistry, since without a knowledge of this branch of science it would be impossible to determine the composition of minerals.

Minerals are classified according to their structure, chemical composition and physical conditions. In structure solid minerals are either crystalline or massive. The study of the crystals of minerals is important, since each substance always crystallizes in the same form and shape. Another test is the hardness by numbers from 1 to 10.

You could write to one of the editors of the mining sections near you and perhaps he could send you the names of some mining company or smelter that would send you some specimen of ore. The transportation charges from here would be so great that it would hardly be worth while to get any down in this section. California has mining and also oil industries.

Petroleum is found in rock or sand. In places it exudes slowly from seams in the rock and hardens on coming in contact with the air. Wells are bored down at these places, or where the oil comes out of the ground with water and forms pools. Sometimes the oil is under great pressure, and when the reservoir is struck the well flows in a steady stream.

As it comes from the wells, petroleum is a dark-colored, oily liquid, varying in shades from brown to black, and in thickness from the consistence of kerosene to that of warm tar. In this condition it is known as crude petroleum. As you are studying mining it would be a waste of time for me to go into a discussion on that subject.

The oil pools are found generally in a low part of the country, while mining is confined principally to mountainous sections. Coal, iron, lead, zinc, silver and copper mixed, and quicksilver are found in Texas. Mines are located principally by the kind of outcropping rocks on the surface of the ground or in the bluffs along streams.

Hawaiian Curios

ANOTHER trade secret snaked out from the dim half-light of romance and paraded quivering before the multitude in the noon-day glare of truth:

Question:—"Am taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by *Adventure* in asking you for information concerning the Hawaiian Islands.

A chum and I are planning a trip to the islands. We expect to work our way over on a passenger boat as mess boys. Do you think it is possible?

When there, we want to take in all the sights.

All your information concerning customs and travel is highly desired. Could you secure me a map or any other printed matter dealing with the islands? I would like some advice on collecting curios."—GEORGE S. GEE, Lincoln, Nebr.

Answer, by Mr. Halton:—Referring to your letter of the 20th inst. regarding opportunity in the Hawaiian Islands for adventure, I am afraid I can give you no encouragement in this matter. It would be impossible for you to work your way over to the islands, for the reason that you would be classed as a deserter if you left the ship in the islands without the consent of the captain.

Being part of the United States, you probably would not find opportunity for adventure such as you might find in other more remote quarters of the globe which would be distinctly foreign. The English language is spoken throughout the islands, and the booklet sent you under separate cover will give you a very good general idea of what you may expect. The booklet also gives you a map of the islands.

As to collecting curios, I would like to whisper in your ear that most of the curios that are sold in Hawaii are made around Chicago here.

Send questions direct to expert in charge—NOT to the magazine.

Pointers on Revolver Shooting

AN INTERESTING pair of questions, with their accompanying answers, bearing on the same subject, happened to hit this desk at the same time. All matters pertaining to revolvers are of course in Mr. Wiggins' field; but I'm sure he won't take it amiss if Mr. Whiteaker rises this once to explain quick-draw shooting as it's practised in Texas:

Question:—"I have long been interested in target-shooting with a pistol or revolver and do very well at various ranges, deliberate fire. For a long time I have thought that I would like to practise the quick draw and shooting from hip without aim, *à la* old-time Westerner. I consider this more practical than the slow-fire target-shooting.

I would like to get some pointers on the quick draw if possible, the hang of gun from belt, etc."—EDGAR W. DAVIS, Cambridge, Mass.

Answer, by Mr. Whiteaker:—It is a good idea to know how to shoot both ways, the deliberate aim and the quick draw, firing from the hip. In pistol contests—as in the Army—you would be required to shoot in a certain way, that is, *à la Army*, long aim with the revolver held pointing at the target. After a few shots a person grows more or less nervous, muscles twitch in the arm and also of the eyes caused by the strain, which naturally decrease the accuracy of shooting.

In practising the quick draw the pistol holster should hang loose about a palm length below the belt. That is, when you put your thumb at the top of your belt the butt of the pistol will fit in your hand. Grasp the handle, butt, or stock—whichever you want to call it—tilt the holster and draw the revolver backward, at the same time twisting your body toward the left side. All of this can be accomplished as one movement after some practise.

By drawing the revolver upward instead of backward it often sticks and the movement of your body would be of no assistance, while the other way the pistol is in a position to shoot at once. Be sure that

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your revolver is empty when you start the quick draw until you become accustomed to it.

Cock the pistol as you draw it out of the holster by letting your thumb rest on the hammer; press your hand upon your hip bone, look at your target and pull the trigger. After some practise your hand will act more in concord with your brain and eyes, and you will be astonished at the result. This is the shooting from the hip that used to be so much in vogue years ago.

Some of the cowboys used to tie their holsters to their chaps, which made it harder to draw quickly and shoot from the hip; it kept the holster from flopping up and down when they were riding. I could show you a great deal better than I can tell you; still I hope that you can get something out of the description.

Now here's the way it's done in the Northwest country, where Brother Wiggins holes up:

Question:—"I am a fairly good shot with a revolver but have practised only on stationary targets (when I have been able to practise at all) and consequently I realize just how little I know about the art of pistol-shooting, so I am writing to you for some "info."

I used a .45 automatic some while in France but I don't think much of an automatic for a lot of reasons which would take too much time to write here. Anyhow it's too clumsy in my opinion to be a first-class weapon.

Although I know very little about it, I like a Colt's single-action .45 best of any type of small arm. For one thing I know it is very accurate and effective at short ranges.

At present I have a double-action Colt's .45 swing-out, but don't care much for it and just as soon as possible I'm going to get a single-action .45 with a 7½-inch barrel and spend all the time I can practising with it.

Now here's what I'd like to know:

1. Where and how is the best place to carry a gun?

2. How to practise and acquire a quick draw from that position?

3. Can a gun be drawn faster from the waistband of the trousers than from either the hip or shoulder holsters?

4. Most important of all—how do you fan the hammer of a six-gun? What I mean is, how do you operate a six-gun rapidly and accurately? What's the speediest way of operating a six-gun?

To sum up, I want to know everything there is to know about a six-gun.

I'm going to get hold of that "six" I spoke about before; but I expect to have some trouble doing it because of the Sullivan Law in N. Y. State.

I figure that to acquire speed and some accuracy with an automatic is not so very hard considering its automatic loading and execution and double action, but to become an expert with a six-gun (which I intend to be) and to be able to fire same nearly as rapidly and more accurately than an automatic or double-action revolver, you sure have to go some; but then when you succeed you have accomplished something worth while.

I guess I've said enough, and you sure must be tired reading my junk; so I'll finish with thanks in advance for your trouble and kindness and hope to remain, EDWIN B. MOORE, Ozone Park, L. I.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—First: I prefer to carry a gun in (A) an open holster low on the right thigh, with the holster tied down to the leg, as this seems to be the most accessible place to draw from for a snap shot; (B) or in a shoulder holster on the left shoulder, and the gun and holster concealed by the coat or vest, or both, if both are worn. My preference is for the former, however, unless I don't care about the passers-by knowing I am packing something.

Second: The drawing of a six-gun is done differently by about every man who has ever tried it, I think. I always jerk a gun from a holster with as quick a snap as I can, and throw it rapidly down on the target or tin can with the same motion. I aim to cock the revolver by dropping my thumb about the hammer spur as the revolver drops into line with the mark.

For swift work I prefer the loop that holds the holster to the belt to be on the rear side of the holster, just behind where the trigger guard comes when the gun is in the holster, as the weight of the gun keeps the top of the holster canted forward and this eliminates the tendency of the revolver to bind in the holster as it's drawn.

From the shoulder holster the gun is drawn with the hand on the opposite side of the body, across the chest, and swung into line and cocked as in the preceding account.

Third: I have found the waistband of the trousers a very convenient place to carry and draw a gun from, but with the big Colt Army S. A. it is too tight a fit. For speed the leg holster is unsurpassed, to my notion.

Fourth: To fan the hammer of the big Colt S. A. you hold the gun in a natural manner in the right hand, with the trigger held back, and the gun leveled at the mark, the elbow braced against the hip-bone. Then brush the spur of the hammer swiftly with the left hand, and the racket will remind you of the happy (?) days in France with the "typewriters" going in the front line. (I was a member of the "suicide club," you see.) But don't hope to hit much, as it's not practical at any great distance. Perhaps ten feet is the range for this sort of thing.

All in all, I think you will do well with either your present Colt New Service, or the old single-action Army, the gun that made the Colt name famous as a frontier weapon. And it's unsurpassed today for realiability, I think.

By dropping the thumb around the hammer spur as the gun is thrown up by the recoil of the preceding shot, you can fire nearly as fast as a double-action can be worked, but it takes practise to do this stunt. The weight of the gun dropping back to the level cocks itself in the long-barrel model you intend to use.

Get a good holster, of very heavy leather, and one that fits the gun. Get a harness-maker to make it for you, as the ones carried in the average sporting-goods store are a tragic joke. You can get the real thing in holsters from Capt. A. H. Hardy, Denver, Col.

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to "Ask Adventure" editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

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A Job with the H. B. People

SEEMS to be more money in almost anything else, even magazine work:

Question:—"I would like to get information how to get on a Hudson's Bay Co. post.

I have never done much trapping, but have worked in the woods most of the time.

How long would it take a man before he is able to take charge of a post?"—G. HANKE, Jefferson, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Hague:—By writing to the Hudson's Bay Commissioner, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg, you could get particulars of the possibilities of securing employment with the company, also terms, etc.

Candidly I do not think it would be advisable to seek employment with them, however, as they pay their new employees next to nothing and until a man has become thoroughly conversant with fur and with the Cree Indian language there is very little hope of advancement, and this usually takes several years.

Hudson's Bay factors who have been in the service of the company for many years get only about $75 a month, and theirs is a very hard existence, buried away in the solitudes many miles from any human companions.

There was very little trapping going on in the north last season, as there has been a big slump in fur prices and most of the trappers and traders went broke, with the consequence that only very big companies like the H. B. C. were able to survive, and are more powerful than ever.

Study-Courses in Chinese

QUEERLY enough, this language has more words in it than syllables to make the words with, so the speaker has to depend on intonation to make his meaning clear:

Question:—"Please tell me where I can get Chinese books translated into English in this country.

Where in this country can I learn the Chinese language? Are there any books on the subject; and if so what are their names? Do you know of any correspondence schools that teach the language?

Where can I buy Chinese curios in this country?"—EDWARD A. FLANNIGAN, Globe, Ariz.

Answer, by Mr. Halton:—I presume you mean English translations of Chinese books. These can be obtained at any good bookseller. Probably the most famous of the Chinese translations is that of the Analects of Confucius.

Chinese, I understand, is on the curriculum of the University of California. Inquiry regarding this should be made to the University of California, Berkeley, California. Of course, you understand that every district of China has its own particular dialect which is not understood by the Chinese themselves from other districts.

Cantonese is the language most used in this country by business men; but in the diplomatic corps what is called Mandarin Chinese is used exclusively, so that in making a study of the Chinese language it would depend on whether you desired the knowledge for use in intercourse with South Chinese or with North Chinese.

A very good book on the Chinese language has been published by Sir J. Dyer-Ball, and I should imagine that your local bookseller would be able to obtain it for you. It is probably a very difficult language to acquire through correspondence, even if there are such correspondence schools, inasmuch as it is what is known as a tonal language. One syllable which would be represented by two of our letters would represent six entirely different objects, depending on the tone in which the syllable is pronounced.

Chinese curios can be purchased in many stores in San Francisco and other large cities.

An Ivory Expedition to the Niger

HERE'S some money-saving information indeed, for those of us who are interested:

Question:—"Would it be possible for you to give me an idea of how much an ivory-hunting expedition into the interior of northern Nigeria would cost me?

My route would be as follows: Leave New York and sail direct to the port of Akassa near the mouth of the Niger River; or if that is not practicable, sail from New York to some European port, and from there take a steamer that touches this port.

In Akassa I assemble my men, food, ammunition, etc., and start north, following the banks of the Niger, crossing the river opposite Bida, then pass through this town and continue on north till I reach Zungeru. After leaving this place I will strike east and continue on until I reach the foot of the mountains or hills which run through eastern Nigeria, when I will make my permanent camp for four weeks.

I shall travel about ten or fifteen miles per day, depending on ground we are on.

I want to have provisions for ten or fifteen men besides myself, my gun-bearer and head man for from eight or ten weeks.

I intend to carry just what I need for rough hiking and no more. If practicable I intend to have two pack-mules and one riding-horse.

What kind of gun is best for hunting elephants or other heavy game, and the kind of ammunition that is most serviceable for this line of work?

Where can these be purchased?"—PAUL J. KLITSCH, Pottsville, Pa.

Answer, by Mr. Miller:—*Re* expenses of your contemplated ivory expedition to the Niger. The Elder Dempster quote passage Liverpool to Akassa seventy-four pounds first class, fifty-five second and thirty-two third. A pound is, according to current exchange, a trifle over $3.50 Rates from America to Liverpool I am not up on, as they change so often, but you can drop a line to New York.

There is another and perhaps cheaper route, by taking the Mediterranean lines that call at the Canaries. Write Daniel Beaver, Steamship Agent, 26 Beaver St., N. Y., and he will quote you by the Fabre line to Grand Canary, where West African boats call and you can transship to Elder Dempster.

Now I see you wish to assemble your men and start from Akassa. A cheaper way would be to book

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to Lagos, take the Lagos-Nigeria Railway to Zungeru, which would cost you for passage six pounds seven shillings, plus meals—about fifty cents per meal; or you can book to Kano for ten pounds.

To get a crew and canoe up the Niger to Zungeru would be a very pleasant experience, but expensive, averaging fifty cents per day per canoeman; and then these fellows would probably be no good for the trail. It is difficult to get blacks to hire themselves out for any length of time or to travel far from their home villages.

We used to change carriers from tribe to tribe, except in the case of the Kroomen, whom we imported on time contract from Liberia. But these men are hard to get.

It is the duty of the cantonment officer of each district to provide the traveler with carriers; or the agent of the Niger Company will arrange the matter for you if you are officially indorsed. Naturally the company and local officials do not look kindly on ivory-hunters from the outside.

For provisions you should wait till you get on the coast. The Niger Company's store supplies everything.

Now as to your idea of an ivory expedition. Ivory has become very scarce in West Africa, and seldom will the Government issue license to kill more than one elephant.

License laws are: A visitor's license for general hunting is ten pounds. A "fortnightly license," which would suit your case, is also ten pounds. A bird license five shillings.

Elephant license: This requires special license, and it is not permissible to kill less than a twenty-pound tusker. One elephant license costs fifty dollars. Two elephants a hundred and fifty dollars.

Importer of firearms must take out license and may be required to deposit bond of seven hundred and fifty dollars. If he makes no kill the license sum is refunded. There is a Government royalty of two shillings a pound on ivory.

A general license allows you to shoot antelope, water-buck, bush-buck, hartebeest, gazelle, hippo, etc., according to district and limits enumerated in the license.

As to guns: For all game except extremely heavy game, such as elephant, rhino, buffalo, the Springfield Army rifle, restocked for practical sporting purposes, is best. For the average man, one modern Springfield and one double-express would be battery enough. At the extreme limit these two guns, with the addition of a .405 American repeater, would be all the equipment one would need for Africa.

Drop a line to the Savage Company, stating your object, and they may give you further valuable pointers.

I have answered you fully, because you seem to know what you want and are seriously intending an ivory-hunt. But I am afraid you are going to be disappointed, as far as any ivory results go.

If expense is of no great matter your idea of outfitting at Akassa and canoeing up the Niger to Zungeru is certainly a fine one. But, as I said, I doubt if you could get the jungle blacks to go with you into the interior or even leave the river. Of course, you could pay them off at Zungeru, or at the Niger port of Zungeru, and there hire fresh carriers, which is probably what you will have to do.

Best wishes and luck to your expedition.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

BREDWELL, CLIFFORD. Last heard of in Hart, Mich. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address HARRY BREDWELL, 718 Hopkins St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

BREEDEN, RICHARD O. Left Orlando, Fla., in February or March, 1919. Afterwards heard of in Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon. His father died in March and his sister, who is very ill, wishes to hear from him. Will any one knowing of his whereabouts please write?—A. W. BREEDEN, Box 26, Calhoun, La.

CAULFIELD, MICHAEL. PAASCH, WM.; and BRETT, JAMES, of the 42nd Inf. Co. B. Please write to me.—E. VAN SICKLE, care of *Adventure.*

PLOUITZ, LEWIS J. Last heard of in New Orleans about 1915. Came from Texas. Have important news for him. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—HARRY L. CAMERON, Box 1491, Beaumont, Texas.

COLSTON, AMOS HILLIER. Sometimes known as Charles Wilson. Last heard of in Ottawa, Canada, December, 1915. Height, about six feet, slim, fair complexion. Left leg amputated below knee. Any information will be appreciated—Address J. O. A. GRAVEL, Advocate, Quebec, Canada.

BRODERICK, GERALD PATRICK. Last heard of in Montreal, Canada, in 1915. Was dining-car conductor on Grand Trunk Railroad. Sometimes called "Jerry." Any information will be appreciated by his sister.—Address CLARA J. NEAL, Beverly Hills, California.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

PECHIN, MISS CAMILLE. Lived in Jeannette, Pa. Last heard of going to Chicago. Any one knowing her whereabouts please write to her brother.—Address R. A. PECHIN, Grand Hotel, Miami, Fla.

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WENDELL, WARREN. Last heard of in Idaho Falls, working on a stock ranch. Also worked at irrigation in the dry plains of Idaho. Any information concerning him will be appreciated.—Address FRANK JURIN, care of *Adventure*.

GRIFFIN, EARL or his mother. Enlisted in the navy when eighteen years old. His mother is supposed to be living in Marietta, Ohio. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write his daughter.—Address BEATRICE GRIFFIN, care of Mrs. Anna Lecy, 174½ E. Main St., Columbus, Ohio.

GOULD, TERRY P. About five feet eight inches tall, heavy build, light complexion. Age about twenty-one. Any one knowing his present whereabouts please write.—Address ROY E. RICHARDS, care of Cuyamel Fruit Co., Puerto Cortez, Honduras, C. A.

CARUTHERS, JACK. Last heard of a year ago in Brooklyn, N. Y. Any information will be appreciated. —Address BUCK HALL, 272 Sherbourne St., Toronto, Can.

BENNING, CYRIL. Last heard of in Edmonton, Alta., over a year ago. Any information will be appreciated. —Address BUCK HALL, 272 Sherbourne St., Toronto, Can.

WICKROY, ALLEN SIGAL. Last heard of in Helena, Mont. Later fought in Spanish-American War. Please write to your brother.—Address LEWIS C. WICKROY, 15 Fluhart Ave., Dayton, Ohio.

PUNCH, MARY. (May be living under name of Collins.) Left Limerick City, Ireland, about seventeen years ago. Last heard of in New York, but at present may be in Denver, Colo. Any information will be appreciated.—Address (Brother) PATRICK PUNCH, 152 Nash St., New Haven, Conn.

ANSELL, REX. Age forty-two years, five feet seven inches, hazel eyes, fair hair, gray over his ears, slight build. Supposed to have come to New York from England, October, 1920. May be suffering from temporary loss of memory. Any information will be appreciated by his wife who has good news for him.—Address MRS. QUEENIE ANSELL, care of *Adventure*.

SCHROCK, FRANK J. Last heard of in Chatsworth, Ill. Height, five feet eight inches, ruddy complexion, black hair, brown eyes, weight about 150 pounds. May be in Paterson, N. J., Providence, R. I., or Decatur, Ill. Any one knowing his whereabouts please communicate with SGT. F. H. PECK, Laboratory 8th Corps Area, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

MARTIN, HAROLD. Sometimes called Jess. Was in the 7th Cavalry; Troop E. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write to his sister.—MISS ESTHER MARTIN, Westport, Mendocino Co., Cal.

THE following have been inquired for in either the Mid-September or October 10th issues of Adventure. They can get the names of the inquirer from this magazine:

ALLEN, George Foy; Bailey, Robert; Basket, Robert; Bergin, Bill; Berry, Marle E.; Boroman, Lt. Clarence L.; Christian, Elam; Clyde, Lewis; Crow, Katherine; Delamater, Frank C.; Ford, Harry; Frantz, Charles E.; Franzen, Fritzoff F.; Gardner, John; Gholston, Jabez; Gileon; Gladden, William R.; Gunn, Corp. George; Harrison, Wm. G.; Haydon, William Jackson; Hicks, Sydney; Hunt, Arthur; Jones, Harry; Kaferle, Victor; Kearns, Gertrude; Krauss, Frank; Lane, Roy M.; Lockwood, Charles A.; Mellard, W. Donald; Norton, Maj. Sam and Lt. Harold; Patton, Francis E.; Paynter, E. Ware; Raley, Thomas Keys; Richardson, Howard; Riddle, Harry; Sage, F. L.; Sanford, Fay; Shaffer, Edward; Skowronsky, John; Spowage, John; Summerell, W. E.; Swann, F. W.; Sweeney, E. J.; Taylor, Jimps; Vance, John Raymond; Wagar, Frank or Fred; Wells, Burtis E.; Young, Franklin Le Roy.

MISCELLANEOUS:—Boys of Co. M, 167th Rainbow Div.; Curley; J. B. L.; Members of 2 F. A. D. Batt. in Philippines and Q. M. C. Vancouver, Wash.

A LIST of unclaimed manuscripts will be published in the January 10th and July 10th issues of Adventure, and a list of unclaimed mail will be published in the last issue of each month.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

OCTOBER 30TH ISSUE

Besides the complete novel by Hugh Pendexter mentioned on the second page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

A BIG NIGHT FOR SLEEPY — *Thomson Burtis*
Plane and parachute.

OLD RANTER, BLUE AND BLAZE-FACE — *J. R. Leland*
Two old dogs and the old fox in a contest of trail-wisdom.

CLEARED — *G. A. Wells*
Deep-sea daring.

FROZEN LUCK — *Ramon Stone Bradon*
Hunger amid the snows.

UNITS OF VALUE — *Edgar Young*
The gold lure.

THE SWORDSMAN — *F. St. Mars*
A cavalier of the deep.

THE LAST CARTRIDGE — *Crosbie Garstin*
Death grins on the *veldt*.

THE PATHLESS TRAIL A Four-Part Story Part II — *Arthur O. Friel*
Into the country of the Red Bones.

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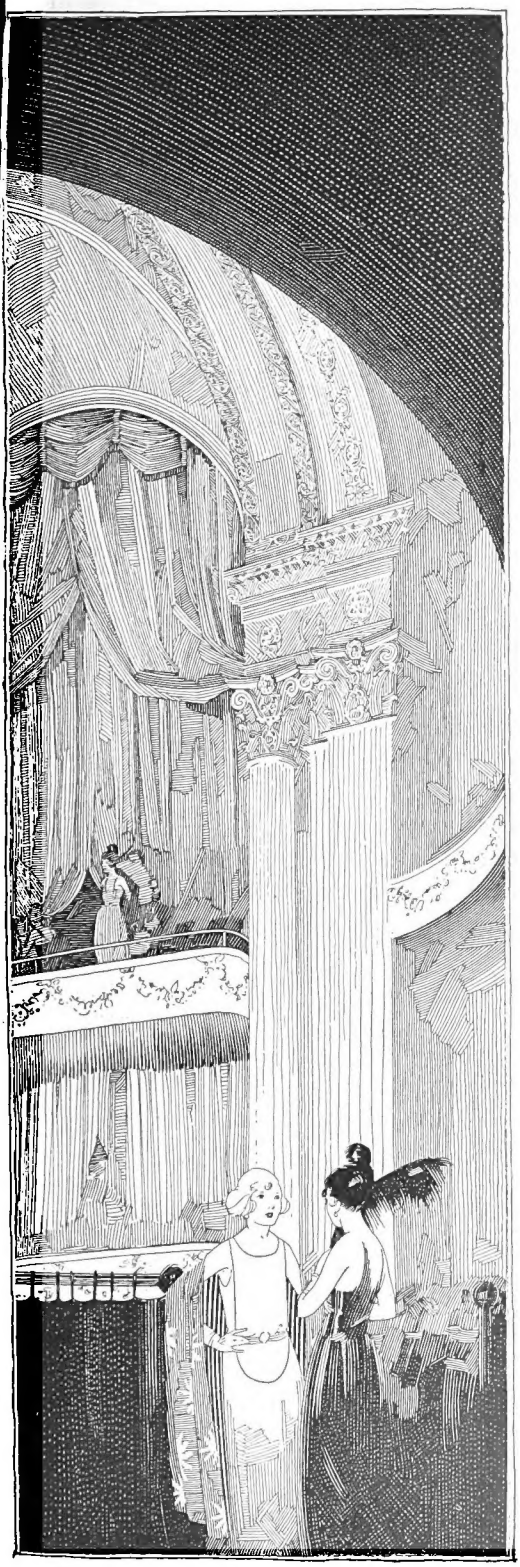

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